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Lebanon

"Diplomatic sources" expect the remains of U.S. hostage William Buckley to be handed over "in the near future," Beirut radio reported.

Inter-Arab Affairs

The Gulf Cooperation Council ended its 12th summit by issuing the "Kuwait Declaration" and a final communique, the texts of which were transmitted by WAKH and KUNA respectively.

Israel

A PRC vice foreign minister continued his visit, HA'ARETZ reported. The Air Force chief criticized political decisionmakers, according to Jerusalem radio, which also reported his subsequent apology for the remarks. The defense minister, speaking to Jerusalem television, termed the remarks "very grave," adding that had circumstances been different, Avihu Bin-Nun would have been fired. A military industries spokesman denied reports that work on the Arrow antiballistic missile has been suspended, YEDI'OT AHARONOT reported.

Iraq

Baghdad radio broadcast Saddam Husayn's Christmas message. The Interior Ministry gave citizens a 10-day "last chance" to surrender weapons, AL-THAWRAH reported. Another class of officers was demobilized, INA disclosed. The health minister was relieved of his post and was replaced by the labor and social affairs minister, INA disclosed. Amman television reported the Iraqi oil minister's plan to rejoin world oil markets. The Arab Cooperation Council still exists, but in a "new form, BABIL wrote, according to INA; Egypt was a founding member of the group.

Kuwait

The Defense Ministry will study the possibility of building a wall on the border with Iraq, according to the clandestine Voice of the Iraqi People.

Egypt

The country rejected a U.S. request to hold a summit meeting with Israel, Radio Monte Carlo affirmed.

Libya

A diplomat denied reports by the London paper AL-HAYAH claiming there had been an attempted coup recently, Beirut radio reported.

Algeria

The president briefed the media on the eve of national legislative elections, Algiers television reported.

Iran

The country recognized the independence of Russia and six Asian republics, Tehran radio announced. A protest was lodged against the arrest of a diplomat in Bern, IRNA reported, adding that the "unfounded" charges were in connection with the assassination of Shahpour Bakhtiar. A Foreign Ministry statement reported by Tehran radio warned the Swiss against extraditing the subject to France.

India

Delhi radio reported on austerity measures announced by the prime minister.

Inter-Arab Affairs

Gulf Cooperation Council Ends Summit

King Fahd Speaks

LD2412235591 Riyadh SPA in Arabic 2135 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Excerpts] Kuwait, 24 Dec (SPA)—King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques, today delivered a speech to his brothers, the kings and highnesses, leaders of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC], during the 12th session of the Supreme Council currently convening in the sisterly State of Kuwait. The text reads as follows:

In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate; praise be to God, and prayers and peace be upon God's messenger; but to proceed. My brothers, their majesties, and highnesses, heads of the Council's member states; my brothers, their excellencies members of the conference:

Peace and God's mercy and blessings be upon you. When we met this time last year in Doha our peoples were still living the shock of the terrible tragedy and painful catastrophe resulting from the Iraqi regime's sinful crime of invading and occupying the beloved land of Kuwait. [passage omitted]

The Arab Kingdom of Saudi Arabia does not fail to affirm the most sincere feelings of affection, love, and brotherhood toward the Iraqi people, while fully comprehending the depth of the human tragedy they are experiencing, and which will not be alleviated or removed other than by the Iraqi regime's compliance with its international obligations, and the complete implementation of the UN Security Council resolutions. The continued refusal of this regime to comply with Security Council Resolutions 706 and 712 naturally will prevent the arrival of foodstuffs and medicines, and will increase the Iraqi people's suffering.

In this respect, we do not miss the opportunity to emphasize the significance of satisfying urgent human needs within the framework envisioned by the United Nations, and represented by the special committee responsible for evaluating these needs and laying down the necessary controls to fulfill them.

Your majesties and highnesses, recalling the reaction of the international community to the aggression against Kuwait, we are overwhelmed by a feeling of hope regarding what this brave international stance represents, a creative and positive development compatible with the spirit and tendency of the new world order that has begun to materialize, the nature and properties of which we have begun to experience in dealing with international issues. We saw how the crisis of the occupation of Kuwait was the first challenge to the principles on which our new world depends, particularly those linked with the perpetuation of states' rights to sovereignty, independence, and the maintainance of internationally recognized borders, not allowing anyone to interfere in states' internal affairs, and above all the peoples' rights to self-determination and sovereignty over their own wealth and destinies and the adoption of peaceful efforts as a program of action for solving disputes. Quite obviously this leads to the categorical rejection of the use of force or the threat to use it in order to achieve expansionist aims or economic ambitions. It was only natural for our experience to influence matters in the region and to be an incentive for a future single outlook.

It is no longer acceptable to allow our region's security to be the target of those who have ambitions for expansion and domination. Therefore our interest at the current stage has been devoted to future security arrangements. In this, we proceed from a view that depends on self-reliance and cooperation with the fraternal and friendly states in everything that serves the aims of security and stability in our region. Within this framework, we proceed from our belief in and conviction of the importance of contributing to the achievement of comprehensive Arab development, and of making available the necesary local and international financial revenues for it, according to the concepts of a free economy. [passage omitted]

Honored brothers: The Palestinian question and that of the occupied Arab land, especially holy Jerusalem, still proccupy us and take much of our efforts and endeavors. We have before us a historic opportunity from which we should inevitably benefit, namely the serious start of a peace process to end the Arab-Israeli conflict and find a just, permanent, and comprehensive solution to the Palestinian problem, a solution compatible with the UN resolutions, one that bolsters justice and ensures the restoration of the Palestinian people's lawful rights. Foremost is the holy city of Jerusalem, a solution that will lay firm foundations for Middle East security and stability proceeding from international legitimacy and UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 and the principle of land for peace. [passage omitted]

'Kuwait Declaration'

JN2512153591 Manama WAKH in Arabic 1300 GMT 25 Dec 91

["Text" of "Kuwait Declaration" issued by the 12th GCC summit]

[Text] Kuwait, 25 Dec (WAKH)—Proceeding from the sentiments of brotherhood and solidarity that bind them and in order to embody common objectives, fate, and the higher interests of their people; to enhance their abilities to shoulder their responsibilities with regard to providing security, stability, and prosperity to their sons; to epitomize the most splendid forms of cohesion as represented by a mixture of the chaste Gulf blood on Kuwaiti territory that forged the most sublime manifestations of sacrifice; out of concern for realizing the principles and objectives contained in the GCC basic law; out of a desire to attain unity in the political, security, military, economic, and social fields; in accordance with the sublime directives of their majesties and highnesses—the GCC leaders—with

regard to enhancing the cohesive ties among the citizens of the GCC countries; out of an awareness of the regional and international changes and developments and the grave challenges they pose—challenges that require serious and persistent efforts to achieve the highest degree of coordination and cooperation; to affirm their position, which rejects the aggressive course and support for it—the course represented by the blatant aggression against the State of Kuwait and its brutal occupation by Iraq—and the threat that this posed to all GCC states, given that aggression launched against any GCC member state is tantamount to aggression against all member states and given that the security of GCC members is an indivisible whole, not to mention that this aggression reflected a departure from proper Arab, Islamic, and international rules of conduct, norms, and values, and was an infringement against a host of concepts and accomplishments of joint Arab action; to express their appreciation and gratitude for the Arab, Islamic, and friendly states which supported right, denounced aggression, and moved to eliminate it; and within the framework of their adherence to the principles and objectives embodied in the charters and resolutions of the Arab League, the Damascus Declaration, the Islamic Conference Organization, and the United Nations, the GCC member states declare:

1. In their international dealings, the GCC member states respect the principle of good-neighborliness and adhere to the principles of respecting the sovereignty of states, the inadmissibility of the acquisition of land by force, noninterference in domestic affairs, the settling of conflicts through peaceful means, and respecting each state's sovereignty over its resources.

2. The GCC member states affirm the unity of their position in confronting the Iraqi regime and the other regimes that collaborated with it in its spiteful aggression against Kuwait, and in not allowing these regimes to penetrate this position. The GCC member states also affirm their determination to pursue this position until the Iraqi regime implements all the UN Security Council resolutions related to its aggression against the State of Kuwait.

3. The GCC member states express their support for the Arab action within the framework of the Arab League, consider the principles and objectives included in the Damascus Declaration as a basis for establishing a new Arab order, and also consider the GCC program on supporting economic development efforts in the Arab states the basis for any efforts aimed at achieving economic development in the Arab world.

4. The GCC member states express their support for the peace efforts that are aimed at achieving a just and lasting solution to the Palestine question, and ending the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of the internationally legitimate resolutions, particularly Resolutions 242 and 338, which are based on the principle of land for peace, and Resolution 425 regarding Israel's unconditional withdrawal from southern Lebanon. The GCC member states also stress their participation in the third phase [of the Middle East peace talks], proceeding from the fact that achieving a just and comprehensive peace and reaching an agreement to tackle the issues to be discussed at this phase is in harmony with the higher interests of the GCC member states.

5. The GCC member states congratulate fraternal Lebanon on the positive steps the Lebanese Government has made within the framework of its efforts to achieve security, stability, and prosperity for its sons. They also express the GCC's readiness to support these efforts.

6. The GCC member states welcome the current changes in the international arena, particularly the changes related to the emergence of the dawn of the new world order, taking into consideration that the liberation of Kuwait is one of the fruits of this order, and especially since this order will guarantee both big and small states' right to live in peace and security and to control their natural and economic resources. They also welcome these changes out of their belief that they will contribute to providing the requirements of the GCC member states' security and stability in a way safeguarding their higher interests.

Summit Issues Communique

LD2512220891 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1101 GMT 25 Dec 91

["Final statement" issued by the 12th session of the GCC Higher Council in Kuwait on 25 December]

[Text] Final statement of the 12th session of the Gulf Cooperation Council [GCC] Higher Council, the State of Kuwait, 17 to 19 Jamad al-Thani 1412, corresponding to 23 to 25 December 1991:

At the invitation of His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, amir of the State of Kuwait, the Higher Council held its 12th session in Kuwait during the period 17 to 19 Jamad al-Thani 1412, corresponding to 23 to 25 December 1991, in the presence of their majesties and highnesses: His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates; His Highness Shaykh 'Isa Ibn-Salman Al Khalifah, amir of the State of Bahrain; King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz Al Sa'ud, custodian of the two holy mosques and king of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia; His Majesty Qabus Bin-Sa'id, sultan of the Sultanate of Oman; His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin-Hamad Al Thani, amir of the State of Qatar; and His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, amir of the State of Kuwait.

The Higher Council has studied developments in the Gulf region in light of Kuwait's liberation and its regaining freedom, independence, and sovereignty, praising God Almighty for making successful the resistance to aggression and the aggressors. It also congratulates the Kuwaiti leadership and people for recovering legitimacy under the leadership of His Highness Shaykh Jabir al- Ahmad al-Sabah, amir of the State of Kuwait.

The Higher Council expresses its pride in the spirit of fraternal solidarity and principled support among its member states, and notes with admiration the stance of the citizens of the council member states which affirms the depth of affiliation and interlinkage, and the unique destiny among the members of the Gulf community, and shows the sincere cohesion between the citizens and their leadership. The Council valued the sacrifices made by the citizens during the ordeal and hard times.

The Higher Council praises the support of the fraternal and friendly states that adopted a stand on the side of justice, right, and the principles of international law, which had an effective role in expressing international will and the implementation of the resolutions of international legitimacy.

The Higher Council expresses its respect and gratitude to those historic contributions in the defense of the sovereignty of the law, in supporting justice, and consolidating firm foundations for security and stability in the region made in the service of worldwide peace. The Council affirms the stance of its member states toward the Iraqi regime by refusing to deal with it as long as it does not commit itself to implementing all the UN Security Council's resolutions related to its aggression against the State of Kuwait.

The Higher Council addresses prayers to God Almighty to accept into his paradise the martyrs of justice and duty, and to bestow mercy on them.

The Higher Council notes with great concern the fact that the Iraqi regime is still obstructing and delaying the implementation of a number of articles of the UN Security Council related to its aggression against the State of Kuwait.

While it condemns the policies of settlement, the Council affirms that it will resist attempts to bypass the resolutions of international legitimacy. It also asks Iraq to speed up the implementation of all the relevant UN Security Council resolutions. It particularly stresses the necessity to implement fully and quickly all the articles of Resolution 687 and the cease-fire conditions, particularly those related to the immediate release of Kuwaiti and other states' nationals who are prisoners and are being detained, the demarcation of borders between the State of Kuwait and Iraq, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 687, and the payment of compensation for the human and material losses caused by Iraq's aggression.

The Higher Council urges the international community, and the UN Security Council in particular, to put more pressure on the Iraqi regime to secure the full and immediate implementation of the resolutions of international legality and to prevent the Baghdad regime from rubbing itself of its international commitment.

The Higher Council notes with great regret the continued suffering of the Iraqi people, who are still paying the price of the bad policy of the Iraqi regime, its persistent intransigence, its playing down of the rules of international behavior and legality, its persistence in practicing the policy of humiliating the Iraqi people, its insistence on continuing the ordeal and human tragedy experienced by the Iraqi people which will be alleviated or removed only by the the Iraqi regime's meeting its international obligations and fully carrying out the resolutions of the UN Security Council, including Resolutions 706 and 712, which permit the securing of humanitarian needs as well as the Iraqi people's needs for food and medicine. The Higher Council reaffirms its sympathy with the Iraqi people and its full eagerness concerning Iraqi territorial integrity and regional safety. [Kuwait KUNA in Arabic at 1145 GMT on 25 December transmits a service message advising that the previous sentence should be deleted]

The GCC march:

The Higher Council reviewed the results of a full decade of common action in the political, security, military, economic, and social fields, and expresses its satisfaction over the achievements of the march of good, growth, and construction realized on the road to coordination, integration, and unification in order to realize the aspirations of the citizens of the GCC member states.

Proceeding from a firm conviction of the importance of strengthening security and military cooperation among member states, and the reinforcing of their defense capabilities in light of the lessons learned from the aggression of the Iraqi regime, the Higher Council affirms its determination to continue coordination and cooperation in the military and security fields, and to promote defense capabilities within the framework of a unified strategic concept that meets the requirements of security, faces up to the challenges of the situation, achieves stability, and guarantees the nonrecurrence of such aggression.

Their majesties and highnesses express their great appreciation and deep gratitude to His Majesty Sultan Qabus Bin-Sa'id of Oman for the effort he exerted in assuming the responsibility of the Higher Security Committee, for his generous help in the committee's work and his patronage of its activities, and for putting his expertise and experience in the comprehensive strategic report that was prepared for the summit. This was an expression of the faith of his majesty in the march of the council, and his eagerness that the work of the council be marked by scientific and objective preparation.

The Higher Council affirms its resolve to continue the process of joint action with rapid steps for the sake of entrenching the building of cooperation and continuous conformity with the aspirations of the citizens and strengthening this blessed march toward achieving the desired objectives. It also affirms its determination to realize more qualitative achievements through the planned program compiled by the ministerial committees for gradual implementation of the provisions of the unified economic agreement in a way that ensures

strengthening the interlinking of interests among the citizens and builds more joint projects and removes all obstacles in the way of the movement of citizens, trade, and the flow of investment. It stresses to the specialized ministerial committees the need to speed up the taking of steps and of necessary and essential measures to complete the implementation of what is left of the provisions of the unified economic agreement.

Proceeding from its belief and conviction in the role of the GCC states in taking part in a comprehensive Arab development, and proceeding from its conviction and belief in the importance of concerting local and international resources toward realizing this in accordance with the concepts of free economy, the Council approved the agreement on setting up a program [passage indistinct].

The current Arab situation:

The Higher Council studied the peace efforts in the Middle East, and praised the rapid and sincere efforts that have been shown by the international community, particularly by the United States.

In this connection, while the Higher Council would like to express its satisfaction with the results of the Madrid peace conference, in which the Council took part as an observer, it would like to express its utmost regret regarding the faltering of bilateral negotiations that began in Washington on 10 December 1991, despite the readiness of Arab delegations to enter into serious and committed negotiations, and were met by continuous Israeli obstinacy and attempts to sabotage the peace process.

While the Council looks forward to the resumption of the next round of bilateral negotiations next January without any further Israeli obstacles and without raising procedural issues, it hopes that these negotiations will achieve tangible progress to reach the desired goals.

The Higher Council stresses its support for the peace efforts and the firm determination of its states to take part in the multilateral meetings out of their desire to enhance regional security through fundamental solutions to all the conflicts of the region in the shadow of a new world order that perpetuates the will of peace and bolsters international stability, and out of their contribution to the advancement of the peace process and the achievement of a just and comprehensive settlement to the Arab-Israeli conflict and the Palestinian issue which would guarantee the legitimate rights of the Palestinian people and recover the occupied Arab territories, Holy Jerusalem first of all, on the basis of UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338, resolutions of international legitimacy, and on the principle of land for peace.

The Higher Council emphasizes the need to clear the whole Middle East region of all kinds of weapons of mass destruction, including nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons.

The Council expresses its strong concern over and displeasure with the continuation of the policies of the Israeli occupation authorities aimed at entrenching and expanding the illegal settlements in occupied Arab areas, the continuation of attacks on the sacred shrines in holy Jerusalem, the high-handed measures against the Palestinian people, and the increase in the number of victims of occupation: martyrs, wounded, detainees, homeless, and deportees. The Council condemns the policies of imposing the status quo by force and the acts of oppression that are not in harmony with the current peace efforts. It reaffirms its stand alongside and its complete support for the steadfastness of the Palestinian people in the occupied Arab areas.

The Council welcomes the positive developments in fraternal Lebanon and the steps taken by the Lebanese Government to safeguard Lebanon's independence and the integrity of its territory and sovereignty, and to realize national agreement. It calls for the unconditional implementation of UN Security Council Resolution 425 and the withdrawal of Israeli forces from southern Lebanon without any delay or postponement. It reaffirms its support for the international construction and development fund in Lebanon.

In reviewing Arab relations in light of the results of the Iraqi aggression against the State of Kuwait, the Council expresses its extreme satisfaction with the results of cooperation between the GCC states and both the Arab Republic of Egypt and the Syrian Arab Republic within the framework of the Damascus Declaration. It reaffirmed that it looks forward to the realization of the principles and objectives that were agreed on by the eight states, and that the declaration will open new and wide horizons in Arab affairs and cooperation because it is considered to be the nucleus of joint Arab action within the framework of the Arab League and a basic contribution to laying down firm and clear foundations based on commitment in word and deed to the Arab and international charters for the sake of realizing joint Arab interests.

The council stresses that its dealings within the framework of inter-Arab relations will be on the basis of the principles of the Damascus Declaration, and it calls on the Arab states to support this position and to be committed to these principles.

The Council expresses its great concern and regret over the deterioration of the security situation and the continuation of the state of division between brothers in Somalia, stressing its standing on the side of the Somali people in their painful ordeal. It urges all Somali nationalist forces to remove the causes of differences between them, to consider national interests before any self-interest, and to work to preserve the unity and safety of Somalia, which is their greatest and first responsibility.

The council hails the good reconciliation efforts exerted by King Fahd Bin-'Abd-al-'Aziz, custodian of the two holy mosques, and it is looking forward to the return of

security and stability to fraternal Somalia, given the importance of this to peace and stability throughout the Horn of Africa.

Relations with Iran:

Having heard a presentation by His Highness Shaykh Khalifah Bin- Hamad Al Thani, amir of Qatar and chairman of the preceding session of the Higher Council, on the chairmanship's contacts with the Islamic Republic of Iran regarding relations between the GCC member states and Iran, and bringing to mind its decision at the Dawhah summit affirming the wish to improve relations with that country, the Council expresses its satisfaction over the positive and tangible development in relations between the two sides. The Council affirms its eagerness to lend momentum to bilateral relations with the Islamic Republic of Iran in the service of common interests in accordance with Islamic and international principles and conventions, and as a reflection of the depth of the ties of religion and neighborliness between them.

The international situation:

The Higher Council followed the positive international developments, the end of the cold war, the retreat of ideological and traditional conflict, and the disappearance of political barriers. It followed the efforts aimed at reducing the arms race and proceeding toward constructive international cooperation in finding basic solutions to the hotbeds of regional tension by peaceful means in accordance with practical and rational means and sponsoring the policy of international openness, free economy, working for bolstering development, and employing resources for the good of the peoples and their well-being. The Council expresses its extreme satisfaction with these developments and affirms the resolve of the member-states to be involved in effective participation in entrenching the pillars of the new world order on the basis of justice, fair play, and with whatever is in harmony with the higher interests of the member-states.

The Higher Council followed with extreme concern the current events and developments in the Soviet Union and expresses the satisfaction of the member states with the emergence of the Commonwealth and their readiness to recognize its members in the shadow of these states' being committed to international agreements and treaties. The GCC states also hope that the political leaderships in these independent states will accomplish whatever strengthens world stability, peace, and security.

The Higher Council expresses highest appreciation and gratitude to His Highness Shaykh Jabir al-Ahmad al-Jabir al-Sabah, amir of the State of Kuwait, and to his government and people for the welcome, hospitality, and genuine fraternal sentiments accorded to the leaders of the GCC states. It praises the excellent preparations and the great efforts that were made in order to provide comfort for the delegations and to ensure the success of the meeting and the realization of the positive results achieved by the meeting. The Higher Council prays to Almighty God to provide His Highness with continuing health and happiness, and to ward off all bad things from Kuwait and its people.

The Council looks forward to its 13th session in the United Arab Emirates in December 1992 in response to a noble invitation by His Highness Shaykh Zayid Bin-Sultan al Nuhayyan, president of the United Arab Emirates.

Issued in Kuwait on 19 Jamad al-Thani 1412, corresponding to 25 December 1991

Al-Qadhdhafi Special Envoy Attends

LD2412114891 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1102 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Kuwait, 24 Dec—Ahmad Qadhaf al-Dam, special envoy of the Libyan president, arrived in Kuwait this morning at the head of an official delegation.

Muhammad Sulayman Sayyid 'Ali, adviser at the Bureau of the Amir of Kuwait, and the ambassador of the fraternal Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriyah in Kuwait headed those welcoming the Libyan envoy.

Informed sources told KUNA that the Libyan envoy will convey a message from the Libyan president, Colonel Mu'ammar al-Qadhdhafi, to the GCC leaders now meeting in Kuwait. The sources, however, did not reveal the contents of the message.

Palestinian Affairs

Mahmud 'Abbas on Procedural Dispute in Washington

LD2412223191 Algiers Voice of Palestine in Arabic 1702 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Brother Abu-Mazin [Mahmud 'Abbas], member of the PLO Executive Committee, said in a press statement that the PLO considers what is happening in Washington as a completion of what took place in Madrid. However, no qualitative step has been recorded regarding the Palestinian-Israeli dialogue. Despite the fact that numerous meetings and contacts between the two sides took place, nevertheless, matters were confined to what is labeled as dialogue.

Brother Abu-Mazin added that the result that was achieved during the Washington negotiations was to aquaint oneself with the opinions and stances of the negotiating sides regarding the measures and the form of the negotiations, as the areas of agreement and of differences emerged in a clear way. During these meetings efforts were aimed at narrowing the areas of disagreement, particularly those related to the Palestinian delegation, which is not part of the joint delegation.

Brother Abu-Mazin highlighted that during the Washington talks, the Palestinian delegation submitted proposals to the the Israeli delegation which stipulated that the three delegation heads would enter the negotiations hall together so that the dialogue would have an official

form; that a meeting between the joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation and the Israeli delegation would take place; and that a two-way dialogue would take place, a Jordanian-Israeli and an Israeli-Palestinian dialogue, in a separate room so that a discussion of the agenda could be begun immediately. Following the end of the negotiations, there should be no objection that the joint delegation would meet the Israeli delegation to debate the points regarding the venue and date of the next stage.

Brother Abu-Mazin stressed that Israel rejected these ideas because it insisted that the agenda be discussed during the meeting with the joint delegation to begin with; and that it should be invited on request from any side in the future. Stemming from these facts, Israel's intentions are exposed. It wants to obliterate the landmarks of independent ("delegations) through repeated invitations to meet the joint delegation, and through entrenching the contents of the negotiations through the joint delegation.

Brother Abu-Mazin concluded his statement by reiterating the PLO's call for holding a meeting between Arab states before the convening of the multilateral negotiations in Moscow and the resumption of the peace negotiations in Washington so as to coordinate Arab positions and support joint Arab action.

Groups at Intifadah Conference Reject Peace Talks

NC2412194791 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Arabic 1730 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Report by unidentified radio correspondent from Beirut]

[Excerpts] The third international conference for the support of the Islamic intifadah in occupied Palestine opened in Beirut today. Numerous delegates representing Islamic movements, Lebanese and Palestinian nationalist movements, the Lebanese state, and a delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran attended the meeting.

The first session was held this morning in Beirut at one of the Carlton Hotel's conference halls. [passage omitted]

Shaykh 'Abd-al-'Aziz 'Awdah, one of the leaders of Islamic Jihad in occupied Palestine, delivered a speech in which he emphasized his movement's consistent positions in its jihad against the enemy. He pointed out that Islamic shari'a forbids making peace with Israel in any form. He stressed the need to unite forces under the banner of a unified Islamic program in which the Islamic Republic participates to foil all U.S. plans for a regional settlement.

Hizballah Secretary General 'Abbas al-Musawi affirmed that the Islamic nation's sole option is jihad against Israel. He noted that Muslim mujahidin must observe the weaknesses of the United States, the West, and Israel and exploit them in a process of total confrontation. He said he believes that the Islamic resistance in south Lebanon complements the Islamic intifadah in occupied Palestine.

Abu-Musa [Sa'id Musa Muragha], secretary general of Fatah the Uprising, in his speech focused on the PLO's perverted policy and declared that the Palestinian delegation's negotiations in Washington do not at all concern the Palestinian people. He urged the Palestinian people to close ranks with other Arab and Islamic peoples to confront the Zionist enemy. [passage omitted]

Shaykh Ahmad Muhanna delivered a speech on behalf of Hizballah Palestine. He stressed the importance of cooperating with Islamic Iran and other Islamic countries to thwart U.S. regional hegemony plans. [passage omitted]

The third international conference for the support of the Islamic intifadah will resume its meeting tomorrow and will conclude on 26 December by issuing resolutions and recommendations.

Algeria

President Bendjedid Gives News Conference

LD2512154291 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1935 GMT 24 Dec 91

[First of two installments of news conference by President Chadli Bendjedid with unidentified correspondents in Algiers on 24 December—recorded]

[Excerpts] Ladies and gentlemen, as I pointed out at the beginning of the news bulletin President Chadli Bendjedid met with the national press today. This meeting dwelt on a number of domestic and foreign issues, in the forefront of which are the legislative elections which are just 48 hours away. Here now is the meeting between the president and the national press:

[Begin recording] [Bendjedid] Before I give you the floor to ask your questions, I would like to say a few words on this occasion. I particularly would like to address Algerian citizens, men and women, on the occasion of the forthcoming legislative elections, which are very significant and decisive for Algeria's present and future.

Through this meeting, I would like to tell citizens that I hope they will be able to understand the far-reaching significance of this operation and the stage which we have been going through since the promises which I had announced and had committed myself to—that is to establish a state of law through the practice of democracy in the era of multipartyism.

Following municipal elections, we began preparing for the legislative elections. However, some spurious problems surfaced, and were intentionally perpetrated by some elements who wanted to gain power by force or who wanted to impose themselves to reach the seat of authority through force. [passage omitted]

Today, we are about to embark on an important operation: the legislative elections. Citizens are called upon to go to the polling stations to vote and choose the men whom Algerian society would be pleased to have. [passage omitted]

However, beware of tricks to play on citizens' emotions by some opportunists in some quarters which manipulate the citizen's feelings in order to deceive people regarding their choice. Beware of the hypocrites, charlatans, and liars; they are driving the country toward adventure. Abstention from the elections, irrespective of the pretext, is unacceptable and not understandable by the Algerian state. This is a duty and a right. I call on the Algerian men and women to express themselves and cast their votes in all freedom. We have provided the necessary conditions regarding security and stability. We will make sure that the security forces and those responsible see to it that the elections are fair, completely aboveboard and totally clean. However, no abstension will be acceptable, because this is the direct responsibility of the Algerian people regarding their future.

There is no justification for any male or female citizen to be absent from these elections. My hope is great that all Algerians will participate in giving their votes with respect to this big operation, because the role of the National People's Assembly is a very important role, and it is the master of sovereignty in the future with respect to the issues which pertain to the citizen's affairs in all spheres. The National People's Assembly becomes, after ratifying the program of any government, the only body which legislates, specifies, organizes, and directs at the same time, by virtue of the majority, by virtue of the citizens' trust which you enjoy. Thus, those are your representatives who will be directly responsible for your affairs in the future, together with the executive council, of course.

I have great hopes, as I have said, that all male and female citizens will react positively to this decisive phase of the nation's destiny, and to the future of the generations, including all those concerned from near or far, with regard to the Algerian male or female citizens. This is what I wanted to say to the Algerian society, to the Algerian citizens, to the female citizens, by means of these short words, due to the importance of the subject. Because tomorrow there will be no one to blame the state, or any institution whatsoever. In the past, perhaps, the state, or the party, used to choose. The responsibility was on different levels, in particular the institutions, the constitutional, that is the Assembly's bodies, be it local or national. However, today the choice is in your hands and the future will, of course, be the result of your choice of your representatives in this vital and strategic institution, and at the same the master of decision in all matters related to the building of the Algerian society.

I wanted, through these words, to talk to the Algerian citizens, and to the brothers the journalists and to say to you: You are most welcome, and I am at your disposal for your questions. Please go ahead.

[Correspondent] [passage omitted] My first question: Many political observers and those who follow what is going on in Algeria believe that the agenda of the National People's Assembly will include various trends, perhaps three or four, we cannot determine the number now. This necessarily leads to a national coalition or to a coalition government. What form of coalition do you envisage, and what would the cohabitation [preceding word in French] of the president and government be like?

[Bendjedid] Well, in reality, sometimes political analyses by the brother officials and even by the brother journalists show that when they deal with a subject, they always have in mind the old management method. Both the method of old management and the previous Constitution have ended. We now have the method of the 1989 Constitution which, I believe, allows for flexibility, all flexibility in dealing with issues, whenever the situation changes. Concerning the questions you have posed, and other questions, naturally there will be a diversified National People's Assembly. This is naturally a characteristic of democracy, and thus the affairs of the Algerian

society may be studied seriously. There will not be the case where sometimes somebody, for specific reasons, agrees to something which perhaps he himself disapproves. But today, the door will be open. No doubt, in the future there will be a coalition government, but we cannot give details regarding the future or tomorrow. [passage omitted]

Whatever government is formed, there cannot be a conflict between the president of the Republic and the government, because the government has a program and prerogatives. Naturally, the president of the Republic sees to it that in the program it presents the government preserves the constants mentioned in the Constitution; no more, no less. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] It is expected that the National Liberation Front [FLN] would hold an extraordinary congress immediately after the legislative elections. If the party activists asked for or rejected your resignation from the chairmanship of the Front at this congress—since the congress is the one which decides on resignation—if the participants in the congress reject the resignation of Chadli Bendjedid, considering that he is the father of democracy in Algiers, what will the position be then?

[Bendjedid] I have effectively resigned from the chairmanship of the FLN; however, nobody can prevent me from sympathizing with or believing in the principles of the FLN as an ordinary citizen. The work in the field and organizational work is something and the conviction, my personal conviction, is something else. This is one of my rights as far as the FLN is concerned. Nobody can take from me this title as militant of the FLN, as far as the liberation revolution and the building revolution are concerned.

I believe that the second part of the question is, as I said, premature. When the question is brought up or when the time comes, the answer [word indistinct] will be very clear.

[Correspondent] Have the foundations for the promise given by the government, which came about after the June incidents, to achieve clean and free elections been really laid down now, and is the Algerian citizen really going to vote in an atmosphere which allows him to practice the freedom and integrity which are stipulated in the texts?

[Bendjedid] Naturally and in all certainty, I will affirm once more that all the government has taken all the necessary measures as far as security, transparency, control and the administration's non-interference in the political conflict between parties, i.e. the neutrality of the administration, are concerned. On all this, I can commit myself, in the name of the government, to say that all the measures have been taken. I have myself followed up these [word indistinct]. I am not saying matters are like that, but I have followed up with the brothers concerned with the issue and I will insistently affirm that all the measures have been taken so that the forthcoming elections will take place on Thursday in a normal context.

This does not prevent [word indistinct] some fabricated problems are created such as the time they attempted to sidetrack and stop the elections in June. Thus, we are serious and all the measures have been taken and we will face any challenge to this direction, as far as elections are concerned.

I hope that all the people will contribute to and respect the rules of the game as far as the practice of democracy in the framework of the law is concerned. We promise that we will respect, in a really democratic way, the will of the Algerian people as far as the parliament which will be elected tomorrow is concerned. [passage omitted]

We affirm that we will face any abuse in a decisive manner in order to foil the attempts of anybody who wants to hamper this great operation as far as the democratic orientation is concerned.

[Correspondent] We know that when you entrusted the current prime minister to form a government in the aftermath of June incidents, you entrusted him with two fundamental missions: The first one is to restore security and stability in the country; and the second one to prepare and conduct free, fair, and clean elections. Can we say today that the government has fulfilled its mission as it is nearing the end of its term?

[Bendjedid] Yes, absolutely. I would like to stress to you that all the missions entrusted to the government have been implemented; it could even have taken some initiatives within an economic framework and in other fields, of course with my full agreement. I would like to salute the current government, the government of Sid Ahmed Ghozali, and thank it for its efforts and for the direct responsibility it has shouldered. [passage omitted]

I would like to state that I am satisfied with the efforts that the government has undertaken since its formation to this day; particularly regarding the measures of organization and security that the government has provided. I am convinced that the elections will take place amid calm and stability; this is my hope. At the same time, if some elements want to hamper this big operation, we will confront them with firmness; we will never allow the abuses that obstruct the democratic process of the Algerian society. [passage omitted]

This democratic process was a real wish of the Algerian people. It is worth noting that all the measures that have been taken since the beginning of the eighties such as our flexible method of management in the economic, political and other fields were all aimed and targeted towards a gradual practice of democracy among us, within the Algerian society of course. [passage omitted]

However, when serious crimes are committed against the Algerian society, against Algeria's economy and against the forces and men of security, these hideous crimes, we find that some people fall into a political coma; some of them condemn in a reticent way; perhaps the conditions were such that they were required to take the initiative,

albeit shyly. There are those, and I would not like to generalize, who were brave enough to say no to this style.

[Correspondent] There is some apprehension that reigns in society, in some political sources and some sectors of society. [passage omitted]

First of all, do you think this apprehension is legitimate, based on a realistic analysis of Algerian society? Second, what would your position be as the custodian of the Constitution and custodian of the republican system of the country?

[Bendjedid] This question is asked by some articles in the public press, the Algerian press, and by others. At the beginning, I asked what the Algerian people wanted, what those who are in the opposition wanted, the so-called democrats and others. If they want democracy, this requires work, effort, sacrifice, patience, at least similarity of views between several sides including the Algerian state, because at the end of the day what is at stake here is the interest of society and that of the Algerian state.

Therefore, there could be assumptions, as this question entails. All these suppositions could apply. However, what is required from us here? As I have said, who were those political officials? Before they set to judging the state, they should judge themselves. What have they done for the sake of the country's stability? What have they done to bolster and advance the real democratic process? We believe that all accusations are against the regime, no more, no less. When things reach this stage they ask the following question: What does the regime do in such situations? [passage omitted]

Never mind, let us return to the subject and say: As far as I am concerned, I will assume my responsibilities fully. As long as I am in this position, I will assume all my responsibilities within the framework of the powers which are given to me constitutionally. Let the others, the parties, the cadres of the Algerian State and all the Algerian people also assume their responsibilities. As far as I am concerned, I am ready to assume my responsibilities fully, as I am accustomed to do for the sake of the homeland, neither more nor less. If I ask for help, I do so for the sake of the national interest, neither more nor less, not for Chadli Bendjedid but for the president of the Republic of this state called the Algerian Democratic and Popular Republic and the future of the Algerian society.

[Correspondent] Mr. President, sixty parties in the country constitute a heavy burden to the political situation on the scene. What would their fate be after the elections, and will you continue with this burden?

[Bendjedid] This large number of parties is expected, and the brothers remember somewhat that some countries have had this before us. In Spain, after the removal of the Franco regime, I believe that they reached 105 parties; in Portugal there are 75 parties. This is natural when we open the door for the freedom of opinion, expression and organization. But, I say that after the legislative elections, I believe that many factors will change. Naturally, the information and material benefits will come to an end: The state cannot offer material help to parties not represented in parliament. There are rules to observe. Therefore, naturally, such parties will come to self-dissolution, little by little, or they may form alliances, I do not know. But, as far as the state is concerned, it cannot bear the burden it is currently bearing. After the election of the parliament, after the renewal of the parliament, matters will change regarding the way the state deals with parties.

Naturally, the political struggle will be in parliament. Outside this framework, we do not believe that it would be beneficial to the country, as far as stability and security are concerned. Whoever wants to express and represent something, to speak on behalf of the people is in parliament. Therefore, he expresses what he wants in parliament, and all debate, dialogue, we call it what we want, will be in parliament.

[Correspondent] You have been in this position long enough to be able to know this great people and their conditions. Do you think that the programs presented by the parties are at the level of this great people and capable of getting the country out of the crisis?

[Bendjedid] Personally, without diminishing or belittling the value of the program of any party, I do not see any great differences between the programs (?for the economic budget) of the parties. One presents its program in blue, the other in red, but the objective, the basis and the contents are the same. So, Algeria's problems are known, but dealing with these problems is done perhaps in exaggerated styles, with, if I may say so, a little demagogy. It is the hasty way of dealing with these problems, as if politicians possess the ring of our Lord Solomon [prophet with the God-given gift of getting what he wants]. This is misleading. If one speaks the language of logic, he should not commit himself to things like these and then fail to deliver before the people. These factors disappoint the people regarding any grouping.

Therefore, I say that our problems are those of the Third World. We are suffering from economic problems like the Third World states. Even more, even industrialized states are suffering today. Dealing with these problems requires wisdom, rationality and self-reliance. For quite a long time, I have been warning against relying on others, because I could see the assault against the Third World. I have always stressed self-reliance: Algeria before anything, self-reliance. It is still my belief that we should rely on ourselves and accept a little sacrifice. We can resolve our problems and get out of this crisis, because Algeria, unlike other developing countries, has human and material resources. Perhaps the human and also material resources are not adequately exploited. The day we exploit them in a rational and studied way, then we would indeed be able to get out of this crisis in just a few years, God willing.

[Correspondent, in French] In the aftermath of June, you said that there would be early presidential elections. Mr. President, with the benefit of these five months of stability, the likes of which the country had not experienced in a long time, does your decision remain linked to general stability? Or do you think that in the event of a possible upheaval that the country might experience, it would perhaps be possible for you to reflect anew on what you had decided?

[Bendjedid] When I said that there would be early presidential elections, some sides understood from this that what I meant was that I intended to see these legislative elections take place, then embark on presidential elections, and then say that this is it, it is all yours, you Algerians. I am a responsible man. I have political, morale and ethical responsibility first and foremost.

I would like to state that I am convinced of the need for early presidential elections when the conditions are appropriate. What I mean by this is that one can never think of having early presidential elections during an unclear atmosphere, amid threats against national unity and against the destiny of the nation; all these matters do not apply. God willing, if the conditions and the interest of the country, before everything, warrant that I stay in this position for the legal term, as defined to the president of the Republic by the Constitution, I will stay. In all frankness and clarity, I will do this not out of my desire for the seat, please believe me, I am not a hypocrite, this is not out of my desire for the seat. I have accepted the sacrifice for the sake of the country, no more, no less; for the sake of the country's stability and unity, for the sake that all together we would be able to guide this democratic direction, aspired to by us and by our society, to the shores of safety. This is the only motive. [end recording]

Second Part of News Conference

LD2612044591 Algiers ENTV Television Network in Arabic 1936 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Second of two installments of news conference by Algerian President Chadli Bendjedid with unidentified correspondents in Algiers on 24 December—recorded]

[Excerpts] [passage omitted] [Correspondent] Mr President, I have two questions, one concerning the Maghreb and the other concerning the international situation. Everybody knows that the Saharan question over the last days has been put into a context which is perhaps not marked by conflict but by acute interests. The referendum being officially postponed, do you not think that the issue will once again poison relations within the Maghreb? The second question concerns what is happening in the Soviet Union—the former USSR—and its disintegration. Algeria has important military relations with this country; a large amount of arms purchases is traditionally carried out with this country. Will there be a rebalancing? Considering this country's rapid evolution toward a new strategic situation in itself, would there not be a revision of our military policy?

[Bendjedid] On the Western Sahara question, there are new UN developments resulting from the change or the arrival of a new secretary general. [passage omitted]

The issue was postponed for reasons which will probably be clarified, given time. However, there is a draft project which has been submitted to the Security Council and which will be discussed maybe today or tomorrow. However, one should not be too pessimistic or paint a black picture of this issue in advance. This issue truly remains a stumbling block for present and future Maghreb relations. We would have hoped to find a final solution for this issue within the framework of the UN program and the Security Council resolution. It is my hope that this postponement is brief and that the UN will continue implementation of this project which has been agreed upon by all, including the warring parties, in particular, and us, of course, because we had supported and encouraged—and still encourage—a peaceful solution to this issue within this framework. This is what we have to say on the Sahara issue.

As for the second point, I can reassure the brothers that for years we have adopted the policy of varying our relations with all of Algeria's customers, including the sensitive and strategic sector of Armed Forces, and we have stated this for years. Frankly, I do not believe in putting all the eggs into one basket. This will make us lose the freedom of maneuvre and movement. This is a way of putting political pressure in the hands of those who own spare parts for [word indistinct] or spare parts for factories. Therefore, we have been taking measures for years. Even if this factor has a real negative effect, I believe that, thanks to the measures taken by the Defense Ministry, it will not have a big effect on the Armed Forces.

[Correspondent] During your latest meeting with the People's National Assembly bureau, you spoke of some preoccupations that made us raise the question: Are these preoccupations inspired by some of the unjust principles of the new world order? Or do you have information about suspicious moves either with regard to our borders or across the sea?

[Bendjedid] No, it is not new; we said it and were convinced of it when we said it before this week. By virtue of many factors, we as a state follow all these world developments. What we said is fact, something tangible to us. We did not say that as mere talk but from the premise of reality. Frankly, we believe in logic in all things: economic, social, and political. When the issue is logical, we abide by it and pursue it to the end. [passage omitted]

This international order they talk about is not merely an order laid down and presented by technocrats and endorsed by the superpowers, the Security Council, or others. These are factors that become precedents, and all

these precedents become a program which serves the interests of the superpowers, in particular. They pull all the strings whether we like it or not. There used to be two axes, but this is over; matters are clear. Of course, I said this from the premise of interference in the internal affairs of Iraq's Kurdish minority in the name of minority oppression; direct interference through various means in the affairs of some of the Third World states in the name of human rights; interference in the internal affairs of any state perceived as terrorist or that assists terrorism. The list is long, and one day all these will become laws at the UN Security Council.

Finally, there is the Libya issue. All of these are factors, among other developments. We cannot impose all these emerging developments from which this new world order will be created and will come into the hands of the superpowers at what is called the Security Council. You know the Security Council. The world will be subject to these new rules and methods of administering the world. [passage omitted]

Frankly, Libya is exposed to a threat. Perhaps it will begin with economic measures, and I do not know [words indistinct] but one matter remains outstanding regarding the dispute between Libya and some of the Western states. It is difficult to predict the end of this dispute because it is a deep-seated, big dispute, especially when it pertains to the sovereignty of a state and its citizens. Matters become more and more difficult.

I did not understand what you meant about the borders. Perhaps you heard some statements? I assure the brothers that our borders are safe. I do not see an escalation or the casting of doubt on the issue. We say that we will build the Arab Maghreb and that we must work to come up with something. We said nothing, perhaps it is a mistake or I do not know what, brothers who are neighbors. [sentence as heard] We put matters in their natural context; there is no need to blow them up and create confusion and problems as though one of the neighbors came and occupied part of our land. You know we will never tolerate this. Thank God, we have Armed Forces ready and able to defend the borders. I beg the brothers not to say that this person is talking about this from an emotional point of view. Considering Algerian interests, building the Arab Maghreb is essentially vital, strategic, and fateful in relation to the peoples of the Arab Maghreb region. Therefore, the simple issues which are raised here and there, I hope that no one will attach much value to them, because what we have undertaken is much bigger than some of these secondary sensitivities. Therefore, I say there is no problem in relation to our borders. Our borders are secure, an action which we carried out and which went perhaps unnoticed. However, of basic influence in relation to the scope of relations with all our neighbors is the demarcation of our borders with all these states. Perhaps some points worth discussing remain, and there is a joint committee concerning this. One day, we will settle the matter, and this is the end of it. This is a big act which is very important for the coming generations: those of Algeria and the Maghreb, because one of the factors, among others, for creating confusion and for smashing any country in the Third World that tries to emerge or irritate the superpowers is the stirring up of the issue of the borders so that peoples engage in war, in conflict, as is happening now, even in Europe. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Mr. President, as we enter the first anniversary of the war in the Middle East, how do you evaluate the Arab situation, given the fact that the Islamic summit in Dakar, which was held a few days ago, was not attended by all Arab leaders. You were one of the few Arab leaders who went to Dakar. Second, how do you evaluate the Middle East peace, process which began in Madrid, as far as the Palestinian question is concerned? Thank you.

[Bendjedid] Evaluating the Middle East situation is very difficult. It is very difficult because the poor Palestinian people have suffered and are still suffering homelessness, deprivation and repression caused by Israelis and non-Israelis for more than 40 years. [passage omitted]

Regrettably—and I would like to say here, as everyone is entitled to express his view on the matter— it is lack of political courage not to decide on the Middle East problem. What we reject today we might demand tomorrow! Thus, it has become a process of demands and rejection, demands and rejection, demands and rejection. We are today only looking to trade land for peace. I do not think that even land for peace will be achieved easily.

The United States supervises this problem today. When we criticized the attack against Iraq, we said: Alright, it will be like this—let us wait and see you in the next stage. See whether you have the same readiness, the same will, and the same political stand to resolve the Palestinian problems, i.e. compelling Israel to grant the Palestinians their legitimate rights, or not. The latter has become not only a complex but also a political and moral responsibility for this superpower. We heard from the parties afterward because we had reservations at the beginning about participation, even symbolic participation within the framework of the Arab Maghreb Union, at the so-called Madrid peace conference, and from the country, which initiated the peace process. We found a number of points which we thought were positive. We were thereby encouraged and we said alright let us also hope for the best, encourage, and bless. We said we were going to take a positive stand. I said: Algeria will be positive about peace, but it wants a just and comprehensive solution.

However, following the conference and successive meetings and visits, we have not seen anything which might allow us to have some hope for finding a final solution to the problem, at least in the short term. Maybe hope for a solution in the medium or long terms exists. However, there is currently nothing which might allow us to say that we are heading for a final and a real solution to the Middle East problem. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Mr. President, can we go back to the Maghreb framework? Don't you think that evaluating the steps on the course which the Maghreb Union has marched should be done in light of the new facts in the European and international arenas? 1992 is a decisive year for European unification, and these years foretell the appearance of a new international situation in which weak or poor countries will be devoured, in addition to their being devoured socially, economically, and culturally, at a time when all official statements emphasize the need to unify the Arab Maghreb countries and the creation of an economic and cultural bloc, because many things go in its favor, more than dividing it. [passage omitted]

[Bendjedid] I said in my intervention with respect to the Arab Maghreb that it is decisive. I always stress Algeria's interests before everything. We consider the entire surroundings, the international extent, and, of course, the domain of the area in which we live, at least the western part of the Mediterranean basin. We also consider the European union, the EC which could gradually become the whole of Europe, including the former East, West, etc. [passage omitted]

We started the dialogue with the four-plus-five talks and later by the five-plus-five, and we agreed on the basis for convening a summit at the beginning of the coming year, perhaps in January or February, I don't know. However, the circumstances of the Libyan-French-British-American problems may hinder this effort sometime, I don't know, but the dialogue has started, and the conviction of the two groups is moving one step after the other and controlling the issues. The specialists and officials responsible in different areas started to meet and prepare these files, and work is in progress. [passage omitted]

Egypt

U.S. Request for Summit With Shamir Rejected

JN2412180591 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1715 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Mustafa Bakri dispatch from Cairo]

[Text] Cairo has again rejected a request made by Washington, during the past two days, to hold a summit meeting between Egyptian President Husni Mubarak and Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir before the beginning of the next round of talks between the Arab parties and Israel. Egyptian diplomatic sources affirmed to our radio that the U.S. request, which was communicated through diplomatic channels, asserts that the holding of this meeting in Cairo, or in any other capital, aims at reaching an agreement on a final and permanent venue for the bilateral talks, as well as the multilateral talks.

Washington informed the Egyptian Government that Israel is the one which made this proposal after failing to reach an agreement with the Arab parties on the venue for the next round of bilateral talks. The U.S. request notes that Israel has asserted that if President Mubarak does not respond to this request, Egyptian-Israeli contacts should continue at the foreign ministers' level.

The Egyptian sources noted that Cairo affirmed, in its reply to the American-Israeli request, that the issue of defining the permanent venue for the negotiations is the responsibility of the participating parties in the talks. Cairo also has stated that this issue should not draw a great deal of attention, and that Israel should devote its concerns to discussing substantial issues in the peace process.

Israel seeks from this request to convince Egypt to embark on a mediation mission with the Arab parties so as to convince them to hold the next round of talks in Israel, and in the involved Arab capitals, in an attempt to achieve direct and practical recognition from the Arab countries before achieving any progress in the peace process.

Government Recognizes Former USSR Republics

NC2512183991 Cairo MENA in Arabic 1825 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Cairo, 25 Dec (MENA)—The Arab Republic of Egypt this evening declared its recognition of the Republics of Russia, Belarus, Ukraine, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tadzhikistan, Kyrghzstan, Moldova, and Georgia as independent states.

An Egyptian Government statement said that Egypt immediately will hold the necessary contacts with the concerned authorities in these states to inform them of the recognition decision and to propose the establishment of relations with them on a basis that will achieve the mutual interests of Egypt and these states and their Commonwealth.

Libya

Diplomat Denies Reports of Attempted Coup

NC2412123691 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1130 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Excerpts] Libyan Ambassador 'Ashur al-Furtas visited Patriarch Sfayr today to convey Christmas wishes. After the visit, Ambassador al-Furtas answered reporters' questions:

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Ambassador, is your visit today intended to convey Christmas wishes?

[Al-Furtas] Yes. You know, when I visit his beatitude, we hear his views on various issues concerning Lebanon and our Arab nation. [passage omitted]

[Correspondent] Mr. Ambassador, certain Western information media reported a recent coup attempt in Libya. Is this report true and what is the extent of truth in it?

[Al-Furtas] This report is absolutely untrue. The source of this report was the Arab newspaper AL-HAYAH. It published a sensational headline on its first page and certain international news agencies and radios picked it up. However, I affirm to you that the newspaper's report itself did not say anything that confirms that it is true or convinces the readers of its truth.

Sudan

Egyptian Envoy Criticizes AL-AHRAM Article

EA2512114491 Khartoum SUNA in English 1630 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Khartoum, 24th December (SUNA)—The Egyptian ambassador to Sudan, Dr. Hasan Jad-al-Haq, has confirmed continuation of efforts for promotion and strengthening of the Sudanese-Egyptian relations, adding that nobody or writer [as received] will be allowed to spoil these efforts. In press statements following a meeting with the foreign affairs minister Tuesday [24 December] Jad al-Haq declared that the article written lately by Ibrahim Nafi, editor of AL-AHRAM daily, was below the standard of the relations between the two countries and was only the author's personal point of view. He added that the official attitude regarding the article was expressed in the Egyptian foreign minister's replies to the journalists on [Iranian President Hashemi-] Rafsanjani's recent visit to the Sudan when he said that it is a right for any head of state to visit another state and Iran has the right to undertake whatever activity it likes while Sudan has the right to receive any head of state. Jad al-Haq expressed sorrow over misuse of some journalists to the press laws and freedoms. [sentence as received] He appealed to the mass media and press in both countries to shoulder their responsibilities and their role for promoting the joint relations. He praised the Sudanese press for its adherence to the implementation of the bilateral agreement.

He assured once again that the official and popular Egyptian stances are based on exertion of utmost efforts for strengthening further the distinguished bilateral relations. He pointed out to the trade protocol scheduled to be signed in next January, adding that the Sudanese-Egyptian company for agricultural integration represents a symbol for the joint cooperation between the two sister countries.

Nuba, Fur Tribes Threatened With Extinction

92P60075A Paris LE MONDE in French 12 Dec 91 p 10

[Text] The human rights advocacy organization, Survival International, has indicated in a report made public in London on Tuesday, 10 December, that the Nubas in central Sudan are the target of a government that is trying to "annhilate them as a community." The report points out that the government has closed off the Nuba Mountains region in order to prevent information from leaking out about the arbitrary arrests, the massacres, the attacks on villages, and the confiscation of lands. The [Nuba] community, which numbers 1 million persons, is caught between three cross fires: from the regular Sudanese army; from the rebel Sudanese People's Liberation Army (SPLA), in a struggle against the government in Khartoum since 1983; and from paramilitary groups, armed by the government and belonging to some Arab tribes. Survival International has equally accused the Khartoum government of using the weapon of famine against the Nubas by preventing foodstuffs from reaching them.

Another organization, Africa Watch, which is based in the United States, for its part has called the situation in a 12-page report on Tuesday "a war of attrition," which could lead to the destruction of the Nuba society and their culture, notably their nomadism. The Nubas, who live in southern Kurdufan, are traditionally non-Muslim blacks. According to Survival, the government has authorized the Baqqaras, an Arab tribe living in the hills and for generations in conflict with the Nubas, to attack the latter's villages, to kill the inhabitants, and to seize their flocks and lands.

In 1987, the SPLA, which considers the blacks their natural allies, set up a unit in the Nuba Mountains, liquidating or removing those who refused to cooperate. In reprisal, the army and the military wings of Sudanese intelligence have started to arrest and execute those who are suspected of being SPLA sympathizers. According to Survival, the arrests by the army of the supposed SPLA sympathizers, most of whom have had not their cases reviewed, seem to indicate the existence of a deliberate policy "to exterminate the Nubas who have acquired an education and who could become political leaders." Farther west, the Furs of Darfur appear to be subjected to an identical fate, with the government throwing its support to rival Arab tribes. The report indicates that certain villages of this community have been razed by order of the governor of the province.

Kuwait

UN Delegate Protests Iraq's 'Infiltrations'

NC2412190291 Kuwait Radio Kuwait in Arabic 1700 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Muhammad 'Abdallah Abu-al-Hasan, Kuwait's permanent delegate to the United Nations, has called on the international community to bring to an end Iraq's repeated infiltrations into Kuwaiti territory, in violation of the Security Council resolutions.

In a message to the Security Council president passed out as an official document, Abu-al-Hasan stated that the Iraqi regime's responsibility for the infiltrations into Kuwaiti territory cannot be overlooked. He added that these acts constitute proof of the Iraqi regime's evasiveness and its breach of international resolutions passed by the Security Council. Abu-al-Hasan referred to an incident that took place on 2 December, when 12 Iraqi infiltrators were arrested by Kuwaiti police forces after having infiltrated Kuwaiti territory. They were arrested by Kuwaiti border guards while crossing the border near the (al-Rifqah) checkpoint in the demilitarized zone. The message pointed out that, during interrogations, the infiltrators admitted that they belong to the first organization [tanzim], the 2d border division, the 26th [word indistinct] of the 7th Army of the Iraqi regime.

Spokesman Cited on 'Wall' Along Iraqi Border

NC2412155591 (Clandestine) Voice of the Iraqi People in Arabic 1500 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Kuwait announced today that it might resort to building a wall on its border with Iraq to prevent another aggression by the tyrannical Iraqi regime.

A Kuwaiti Defense Ministry spokesman said the Defense Ministry will very carefully study this matter. He added that Kuwait currently is studying plans based on modern technology to defend the Kuwaiti-Iraqi border, but he declined to explain the nature of these plans.

Principle of Noninterference Reaffirmed

LD2512202991 Kuwait KUNA in Arabic 1757 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Excerpts] Kuwait 25 Dec (KUNA)—GCC Secretary General 'Abdallah Bisharah has asserted the Damascus Declaration is the document that will henceforth determine inter-Arab relations, a matter that should be viewed as the death notice to the old Arab order. Mr. Bisharah added, in a news conference that he held here today at the end of the 12th GCC summit conference that was attended by the Shaykh Salim al-Sabah al-Salim, Kuwaiti deputy prime minister and foreign minister, that the main topics examined by the GCC leaders were GCC countries' relations with the Iraqi regime, inter- Arab relations, relations with Iran, and the GCC member countries' participation in the peace conference. [passage omitted]

Shaykh Salim al-Sabah asserted that Kuwait does not believe in the principle of interfering in any countries' internal affairs, pointing out that its lack of support for the Iraqi opposition is an example of this concept and conviction.

He added that toppling the Iraqi regime is an internal issue and the responsibility of the Iraqi people. However, "if the Iraqi opposition manages to topple the current regime in Baghdad, fair enough. However, if they fail it will be their bad luck," he pointed out.

As far as his views on Iran's stance toward the peace talks on the Middle East are concerned, Shaykh Salim al-Sabah pointed out that every country is entitled to a stance that expresses its opinion, pointing out that Kuwait has supported such talks because the people concerned, the Palestinian people and others, have taken part in those talks. [passage omitted]

Saddam Husayn's Christmas, New Year Message

JN2412192191 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1800 GMT 24 Dec 91

["Text" of President Saddam Husayn's message to "the sons of our great Iraqi people, the Arab nation, and the Christian world in particular on Christ's birthday;" dated 24 December—read by announcer]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate.

From God's slave Saddam Husayn to the sons of the great Iraqi people, the sons of the glorious Arab nation—Christians in particular—as well as to all honorable and kind people in the entire world.

In the name of God, I begin. In Him I trust, and unto Him I turn.

I extend the warmest greetings on the birth of the prophet of love, Jesus Christ, may God's peace be upon him, and on the new year. I pray God Almighty renders this year one of justice and tranquility, and for peace to prevail in Iraq, in our large Arab homeland, and in the entire world.

Such an important occasion compels everyone who has a sense of pan-Arab and human responsibility to pause at what was planted and harvested last year, and at what looms on the horizon of the foreseeable future, in terms of the aspects of the eternal conflict between good and evil given the present and the indications it produces that affect the future.

At the beginning of this year, our country, Iraq, was subjected to the barbaric aggression, which more than 30 countries—led by the United States—participated in, supported by world Zionism and its aggressive entity. In this aggression, they employed the most advanced means of destruction. With premeditated determination and hatred, they not only targeted the Iraqi Armed Forces, but also, indiscriminately, all civilians residing in camps in the desert, in rural villages, and in crowded cities.

The criminal aggressors focused their hatred on the economic infrastructure that our citizens established with the mature Iraqi mentality, immense investment, and persistent and patient efforts over more than two decades.

This fierce and widespread attack, armed with all means of destruction, was preceded and followed by a comprehensive economic blockade that still continues. This blockade prevented Iraq from exporting its oil and the surplus of its other products. The blockade also prevented our people from receiving the necessities of life; foremost among them being food and medicine. This is a violation of all international norms, and a contradiction to all religious and earthly laws.

From all this injustice, all this hatred, and all this violence and destruction that was inflicted on our country, it has become clear that the objectives that were provided by the aggressors as a cover for their aggression did not provide the basic motive for this aggression and the suffering it caused. These events, and the subsequent ones, unequivocally affirm that all the aggressors' slogans were one of the results of the premeditated plotting and aggression against our country, which began to be implemented before the Iraqi forces entered Kuwait on the day of the call in August 1990.

In addition to the principles of the past, the ensuing events proved how our action at that time had a legitimate basis of self- defense and the defense of the interests of the nation and people and their future, in accordance with the reasons that we announced at that time, and which we have repeated on several occasions.

The strongest evidence now emphasizes the soundness of the analysis we presented and the position that we adopted. The clearest indication now is that the aggression against us was premeditated before the events in Kuwait. The lofty economic edifice, Iraq's progress in science and technology, its real independence, its concern for its sovereignty, its determination to prevent interference in its affairs, its demonstration of its affiliation with its nation and the right of the militant Palestinian people to their homeland, Palestine, on the solid basis of real faith, which is supported by a substantial degree of potential. All these were the motives behind the aggression.

The aggressors have taken the issue of Kuwait as a cover for them, after the Croesuses there made it a basis for plotting and sabotage to realize the same objectives even before that time.

The foremost fact within this evidence is the insistence we feel today—which seems to be strange for those who do not know all the facts—on the imposition of the economic siege on Iraq, even though we withdrew from Kuwait 10 months ago.

The unjust Security Council resolutions, adopted on the pretext of restoring the situation in Kuwait to what it used to be, are employed today in an open and arrogant manner as a pretext for stopping Iraq's technological progress and its social, cultural, and scientific development, in addition to using these resolutions to starve the people and as a cover to intervene in our internal affairs.

Thus, instead of supporting the government of the land on which custodianship is placed, the international resolutions have been turned into ones that support all those who would harm Iraq and the Iraqis, and display rancor against them. This has uncovered the glands of venom in the brains of America's rulers and their allies, as well as the treason of Arab traitors who are now betraying Palestine after they had betrayed and committed treachery against Iraq by joining the aggression alongside the foreigners and Zionism.

The accursed Western circles have gone so far as to talk publicly about the possibility of looking for a chance,

what they term as expected, coup at a time when they fraudulently call for democracy as an alternative to coups in other parts of the world, where rulers owe allegiance to them as agents and satellites.

Thus, duplicity and contradiction in stance have become apparent, beginning with the question of Palestine and its mujahid people, and ending with the issue of Iraq and human rights there.

Ladies and gentlemen: Despite all the distress and injustice that have afflicted us, our people, faithful and believers as they are, have exercised patience, relying on God Almighty and utilizing their own resources to confront the armed aggression and the unjust, ruthless blockade, and to reconstruct what the aggressors have destroyed. They have maintained their unity and strongly adhere to their political system and to their ideology and course of life.

At a time when there has been a scarcity of friends at the level of governments and regimes, and rarely has anybody on the official level approached truth and facts, and in light of the so-called new world order, through which they want to go back to the days of the spiteful colonialist control, proud as we realize what status faith in God has, we feel that we are a vital part of the human and pan-Arab whole. We feel that the traitors in the Arab homeland and the Islamic world are isolated from their people and the sons of the nation. They and their masters are becoming furious and so worthless when they recall that their lowly criminal action, and the crime of the blockade against our proud mujahid people, have both failed to fully achieve their wicked objectives against great Iraq. God Almighty, high in His heaven, is capable through His height and capability of seeing everything on the earth, both good and bad. God Almighty has ordered that what is good be pursued, and identified the unjust with what is bad. He supports the Iraqis and the sons of the nation, and helps them in their great jihad and patience. God is the best supporter.

The Iraqis are being watched and protected by the eyes of the great forefathers, foremost among whom is our lord Muhammad, peace and blessings of God be upon him, and Jesus Christ, peace of God be upon him, as well as prophet Muhammad's family and companions, may God be pleased with them all.

Also standing on the side of the Iraqis, on the same position of faith and right, are the sons of the glorious Arab nation, with all available means of expression and action. Also standing on our side are all honorable people faithful to the cause of man, lovers of freedom, advocates of justice, and supporters of peace in the entire world.

Ladies and gentlemen: Our people have fought in the mother of battles, whether in direct confrontation with the aggressors of the evil alliance, or during the confrontation with their agents—the gangs of treason and treachery that were driven by the rulers of Iran, who are involved in vice and evil. I say that our people have fought a battle and displayed a steadfastness that did not have, and will not have, a single rival. Our people demonstrated patience and resilience in the face of deprivation. They have worked, with all the knowledge a human mind may produce, and with all the efforts arms can make, to reconstruct what was destroyed by the aggressors, who thought we would live in complete darkness without food, water, and fuel for years. But first it is God's help, and then it is man's resolve, based on great faith and supported by a deep awareness and a high sense of responsibility.

We will continue to be patient, and resist by virtue, science, and faithful ability until God allows us a great public victory as a final irrevocable result, because God's will is the strongest. For without doubt God's victory is coming, and in the remembrance of God do hearts find satisfaction. [preceding sentence Koranic verse]

Ladies and gentlemen: While we stand at the threshold of a new year, I must stress the determination in the name of all Iraqis that we will maintain our sovereignty, principles, and the right slogans we raised high as rights of all humanity and for our security, which is the security of the homeland and citizens. Doors will continue to be closed in the face of enemies and their wicked goals. We will continue to feed ourselves from what our hands plant, and secure the needs of our people from the products of the minds and arms of our virtuous sons. This does not preoccupy us, but drives us to proceed further toward a free and united Arab nation, and toward a world not governed by ugly exploitation, dominated by tyranny, or fragmented by wars or fabricated conflicts—toward a world dominated by justice, governed by virtue, overwhelmed by freedom, and entrenched with peace.

This is the essence of the world for whose sake Christ sacrificed himself. For the scum disappears like froth cast out while that which is for the good of mankind remains on earth. [preceding sentence is Koranic verse]

God kept His promise; God is great and is accursed by the lowly. Peace be upon you.

[Signed] Saddam Husayn
[Dated] 18 Jumada al-Thani 1412 Hegira, corresponding to 24 December 1991

Saddam Replies to Kurdish Legislator's Letter

JN2312155991 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1440 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 23 Dec 91 (INA)—President Saddam Husayn has said the good chances cannot be blocked by any temporary departure from the right course, and that Iraq will be as it always has been for the past 6,000 years—one people, one hand, one heart, one brain, one conscience.

This emerged in his excellency's reply to an article by Jalal As'ad Jarmaka published in AL-THAWRAH under the headline "A Letter From Mount Kara to Leader Saddam Husayn."

In his reply, the president says:

From Saddam Husayn to Kakah [brother] Jalal As'ad Jarmaka, and through him to all the good sons of our people in the autonomous region:

I have read your lovely letter and understood its deep meanings. In reply, I say I am with you, good sons of our people in Iraqi Kurdistan.

I have not left Mount Kara, Mount Sakran, or any town, village, or neighborhood in the autonomous region, because my heart and conscience are with you beloved ones, just as they are with every peasant in the southernmost part of Iraq and with all good sons of our great Iraqi people, to whom you belong, in blood and flesh, and with whom you share the same destiny, be they in northern, central, or southern Iraq.

If the circumstances of your good people have temporarily made it not possible for us to celebrate snowfall this winter together—snowfall being the blessing of God to man, earth, and life—winter is one of four seasons in the year, and life does not come to an end with any of these seasons.

The good chances cannot be blocked by any temporary departure from the right course. Iraq will be as it always has been for 6,000 years—one people, one hand, one heart, one brain, one conscience—raising the edifice higher when God, through His superior will, wishes to break the spades of destruction and to ward off the advocates of evil, tyranny, and disarray.

Long live our free, proud, and great people.

Long live the Kurds among our people.

We wish Iraq's Kurdistan a dignified, stable, and calm life. God is great.

Accursed be the lowly.

Following is the text of Jalal As'ad Jarmaka's article as published by the newspaper AL-THAWRAH today:

A Message from Kara Mountain:

To leader Saddam Husayn,

[From] Jalal As'ad Jarmaka, member of the Legislative Council of Kurdistan Region,

Sir,

O delight of the eyes of the Arabs and Kurds: I send to you my most sincere, heartfelt greetings. I do not know where and how to begin this message.

My lord,

Your noble visit to my peak last year was a great event that I will never forget. Soon after you bade us farewell, the peaks of all mountains gathered and named me their senior. They decided that I would be the chief of all Kurdistan mountains, that I was to be a place visited by all the kinfolk, birds, and wild animals, and that whoever comes to me will be safe from any mishap.

My lord and Iraq's beloved one:

The following is an old Kurdish folklore story: Each year the snow asks al-Kuk, a beautiful flower that grows in the snow and remains until the end of spring, to marry him. But al-Kuk asks him to wait until she grows up and her hair becomes longer. When the snow begins melting at the beginning of the Spring, al-Kuk turns to the snow and says: When shall we be engaged? It is time. The snow's answer comes in poetry. He says: O al-Kuk, who has long braided hair. I have lost my cushion; the water is flowing beneath me. What shall I do with a husband and a house?

My lord, al-Kuk and the snow should meet. We will postpone the wedding until you come to us. And if you come to us, o beloved, very soon, we pledge to celebrate the wedding of the al-Kuk and the snow when the snow begins to pile up.

My lord and delight of my eyes:

The narcissuses and the red anemones have grown up in the place of your footsteps on my foot and peak, but with more beautiful colors. Come back to us; visit us, my lord. The flocks of the mountain partridges have pledged to you to sing in your presence their beautiful song: O God, build our Kurdistan. The mountain and all the kinfolk will shout with joy and wish you long life, o Kakah. The word Kakah here means big brother. And the silver snow says: We wish we embraced you in this season also and scented the lofty mountain with your musk and sweet smell, my lord and delight of my eyes.

Ride your white horse and bring it to our country as your grandfather Imam Hamzah brought it. Visit us, O man of the big heart, O great arrow, O wise man. By God, we know that your heart is larger than all our sins. You are the patient one who does not reciprocate the sinners with revenge.

That is how we knew you when we first knew ourselves. We are the generation of your revolution and your brightness, Kurds and Arabs. We are waiting for you with all our hearts. We are waiting the beloved Iraqi eagle to land on our hills.

Paper on Saddam's Reply

JN2412133591 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0725 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 24 Dec (INA)—The newspaper AL-'IRAQ terms the sentiments expressed by leader Saddam Husayn toward proud Kurdish Iraqis as a manifestation of the love and affection which can only be carried by the man with a heart of gold, the great leader God granted to the Iraqi people.

In an editorial on His Excellency President Saddam Husayn's reply to Jalal Jarmaka's letter, the paper adds: The leader's message confirms anew that Kakah

[brother] Saddam Husayn harbors deep feelings of affection toward his Kurdish citizens, and also that he accords them due care and attention. Indeed, these sentiments of affection and this care have been guiding his ethical conduct and course with regard to his handling of all issues and matters that concern our beloved Kurdistan.

The paper goes on to say: The Kurds, who are well known for honoring their pledges and keeping their word, can never forget that leader Saddam Husayn was the first Iraqi leader in history to grant them their national rights within the framework of the eternal national unity of the Iraqi people.

The paper points out that His Excellency President Saddam Husayn was the one who engineered the historic 11 March statement, and conceived the Autonomous Rule Law, which epitomized the Kurds' national aspirations within the context of a unified Iraq and on the basis of the historic national unity.

The paper notes that the Kurds' loyalty to His Excellency President Saddam Husayn and their adherence to his unique leadership will remain clear for all to see, as unblemished as the snow covering the Kara mountain, and as deeply rooted as the Kurdish mountains.

The paper maintains that the prosperity created by His Excellency President Saddam Husayn in the northern, southern, eastern, and western parts of Iraq will remain witness throughout all ages, to be communicated from generation to generation, to the genius of the leader who helped Iraq consummate a comprehensive cultural and development renaissance plan implemented by the new Iraqi individuals, descendants of the great unique and manly forefathers.

AL-'IRAQ says: Regardless of the attempts that might be made by those who are fishing in murky waters, suspects, and those linked to colonialist foreign quarters to keep Kurds away from the arena of national action, these people will be defeated and emerge as losers, because the Kurds will remain loyal to the leadership of His Excellency President Saddam Husayn more than ever before.

Concluding its editorial, the paper says that His Excellency President Saddam Husayn is the historic guarantee for our true national unity, for enhancing the ties of brotherhood, and also for reinforcing autonomous rule for Iraqi Kurdistan.

Ten-Day 'Last Chance' To Surrender Weapons

JN2412175691 Baghdad AL-THAWRAH in Arabic 23 Dec 91 p 4

[Text] The Interior Ministry has issued a statement regarding the possession of unlicensed weapons and ammunition. The following is the text of that statement:

As brother citizens know, the possession of unlicensed weapons and ammunition of all types is considered a legal violation, which calls for interrogation in accordance with the law on arms, among other valid laws. Citizens were given more than one opportunity to surrender the weapons and ammunition they possess. Moreover, it was announced that the competent organs will investigate and search for these weapons and ammunition, and arrest those who are found to possess them.

To provide citizens with one last chance, the competent organs will stop investigating and searching for 10 days as of the date of this statement and allow citizens to hand in unlicensed weapons and ammunition of all types—whether they found it or had it in their outright possession—to the nearest police station. Anyone who hands in or provides information about these weapons and ammunition will not be subject to legal interrogation.

Therefore, the Interior Ministry urges all brother citizens who possess such weapons or ammunition to seize this opportunity and hand them in quickly. The concerned parties will be facilitating the handing-in procedures.

After the deadline set in this statement, firm legal measures will be taken against those who fail to comply.

More on Group's Two-Month Ultimatum to Saddam

NC2412144791 (Clandestine) Voice of the Iraqi People in Arabic 1300 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] The Democratic Grouping for the Salvation of Iraq [al-Tajammu' al-Dimuqrati li Inqadh al-'Iraq] has issued a final ultimatum to the (?tyrant) Saddam Husayn giving him two months to step down and leave Iraq. The ultimatum came in a statement distributed in Baghdad yesterday [words indistinct] the defeated tyrant.

The Democratic Grouping for the Salvation of Iraq is one of the Iraqi opposition's factions operating inside the country. It includes people who have leading positions in the Army, the ruling party, and the state.

The statement called for forming a temporary committee to take over power and give the people the opportunity to choose a new government which will be entrusted with the homeland's salvation.

The Voice of the Iraqi People radio recently broadcast a statement [word indistinct] issued by a group calling itself the Salvation Leadership [Qiyadat al-Inqadh] and another important statement by a group calling itself the National Constants [Al-Thawabit al-Qawmiyah]. Both groups include important and leading figures in the party, state, and Armed Forces.

The Democratic Grouping for the Salvation of Iraq's recent ultimatum marks the success of diligent efforts to unite opposition forces inside the country.

The ultimatum giving the tyrant two months to give up power and depart Iraq is a natural outcome of the turbulent situation in the homeland and the fact that the tyrant's crimes have exceeded the limits that the free men of Iraq can tolerate.

The ultimatum coincides with current Iraqi, Arab, and international efforts to unite forces and save the Iraqi people from the (?dark) fate to which they are being led.

The Iraqi opposition sources expect Armed Forces officers to carry out a military coup d'etat to topple the tyrant and his murderous regime and establish a temporary body [words indistinct] direct elections by which the entire Iraqi people freely will choose a suitable government.

Additional Class of Reserve Officers Demobilized

JN2612094091 Baghdad INA in Arabic 0920 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 26 Dec (INA)—Staff Field Marshal President Saddam Husayn, commander in chief of the Armed Forces, has ordered the demobilization of Class 33 of reserve officers, excluding physicians.

This has been stated to the newspaper AL-QADISIYAH, published here today, by Staff Lieutenant General Salah 'Abbud, assistant chief of staff for administration.

He said that the demobilization will begin on Saturday, 28 December.

It should be mentioned that Classes 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, and 32 of reserve officers have already been demobilized.

Iranian Opposition Foils Attempt To Assassinate Leader

JN2512203291 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1950 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 25 Dec (INA)—Iranian opposition Mojahedin-e Khalq Organization has announced that its elements have foiled an attempt to assassinate the organization's leader, Mas'ud Rajavi, near one of its offices in Baghdad—an attempt in which a number of terrorists were involved. These terrorists were placed by the Iranian regime as diplomats at their embassy in Baghdad.

In a statement issued in Baghdad on 24 December, the organization said that elements of the Iranian resistance in Baghdad arrested the terrorists of the Iranian regime in an Iranian Embassy car while they were preparing to assassinate the organization's leader.

It added that several elements from the regime's embassy in Baghdad used embassy cars on several occasions to chase and assassinate Iranian resistance elements under cover of their diplomatic status in order to peddle their conspiracy.

The organization's statement affirmed that the Iranian resistance elements have been familiarized with the details of the Iranian regime's plan for the liquidation of the opposition elements in Baghdad, after the implementation of a series of terrorist operations against the Iranian opposition in other states.

The organization cited a close aide to Iranian President Rafsanjani as saying that after the assassination of a number of Iranian opposition members abroad, now its Rajavi's turn because he stands behind all our difficulties and troubles.

The opposition Iranian Mojahedin-e Khalq organization said the regime's mullahs have tried to exploit the incident of the terrorist Iranian diplomat who, along with another terrorist, tried to attack one of the organization's elements near one of its offices on Tuesday, 24 December. Thus, they broke into loud wails and shed crocodile tears for the harm done to the terrorist in an attempt to erase the regime's fat record of crime and terror in many world states, in an attempt by the dictatorial regime to prepare for the liquidation of the elements of the Iranian resistance wherever they may be.

Labor, Social Minister Replaces Health Minister

JN2512183391 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1827 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 25 Dec (INA)—A republican decree was issued tonight relieving Health Minister 'Abd-al-Salam Muhammad Sa'id of his post and appointing Umid Midhat Mubarak as health minister.

The new health minister, Umid Midhat Mubarak, was the minister of labor and social affairs. In accordance with the republican decree, he will also be the acting minister of labor and social affairs.

PUK Communique on 16 Dec Meeting

NC2012202391 (Clandestine) Voice of the People of Kurdistan in Arabic 1600 GMT 20 Dec 91

["Final communique" issued by the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan Command Committee following its extraordinary meeting on 16 December; place not given—read by announcer]

[Text] The Patriotic Union of Kurdistan [PUK] Command Committee held a meeting on 16 December 1991. The committee discussed the current situation and developments and adopted the necessary decisions accordingly. The Command Committee noticed the increasing escalation in the struggle of the masses, the increasingly higher morale of the people, and the growing spirit of steadfastness and resistance among the massess, despite the economic war being waged by the [word indistinct] dictatorship against the people of Kurdistan and the new waves of displacement and eviction caused by the recent military aggression. The committee noted with satisfaction the following developments in the Iraqi, Kurdish, and international arenas:

1. The increasingly strangling, general, and overall crisis in all political, economic, and military aspects within the collapsing dictatorship.

2. The growing and intensifying isolation at the Arab, regional, and international levels of the dictatorship, which is detested by the people, abhorred at the Arab level, and hated at the international level.

3. The increasing discontent and grumbling among the ranks of the Iraqi people, the continued popular resistance in southern Iraq, and the escalation of the revolutionary tide in Kurdistan.

4. The widespread and evident dissatisfaction within the ranks of the Iraqi Army, be they soldiers, noncommissioned officers, or officers. The recent events in the battles of [word indistinct] in the areas of (Kibri, Klar, al-Sulaymaniyah, and Irbil) have proven that elements of the Iraqi Army hastened to stop the fighting and became friendly with the peshmerga, not out of cowardice or breakdown, but out of conviction that the dictatorship is the source of all affliction, calamity, disaster, is the cause of aggression and oppression, and out of belief in Arab-Kurdish fraternity and the need to preserve it from the follies of the brutal dictatorship.

The PUK Command Committee has been reassured of the following developments within the Kurdish arena:

1. The expansion and spread of PUK organizations in a noticeable way throughout Kurdistan.

2. The improvement, progress, and incresing strength within the ranks of Kurdistan's peshmerga. The organized military training campaign has succeeded well. Thousands of peshmerga have graduated from the first course and more courses are under way to train thousands more. The quality, duties, discipline, and awareness within the ranks of the peshmerga have improved, and the purging operation is proceeding normally.

3. The increasing popular struggle and widespread influence of PUK and the growing widespread popular support for PUK policies from the political, informational, and struggling aspects.

4. The steadfastness of the Iraqi Kurdistan Front and the preservation of its unity of struggle despite the hostile attempts to divide its ranks and cause splits within it and despite its occasional noncommitment to decisions issued by the Front's political leadership.

5. The spread of peaceful political, popular, and revolutionary acts of struggle among the people, as demonstated by the overwhelming strikes and demonstrations.

6. The tendency by the masses to organize themselves and the emergence of several popular organizations established on democratic bases and holding free elections to form their administrative departments.

7. The growing popular desire for democracy and elections and the rejection against the return of the repressive and partisan government agencies. Tens of thousands of employees and workers would rather starve with their colleagues than receive the government's salaries and privileges.

8. The failure and inability of the dictatorship to force the Iraqi Army into fighting the people of Kurdistan, the increasing popular resistance, and the growing strength of the peshmerga troops and their determination to resist and confront the aggression.

9. The increasing international determination on the need to topple the autocratic regime and the international community's declaration on the need for coordination and cooperation with the Iraqi opposition to achieve the mission of ridding Iraq, the region, and the world of the evils and sins of the dictatorship.

10. The renewed mandate of the 500-strong international police force, the renewal of the assignements of the UNHCR [United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees], the success of Prince Sadruddin Aga Khan's mission in forcing Iraq to renew the exchanged memorandum of understanding on the distribution of humanitarian aid to the Kurdish people, and the renewal of the mandate of the rapid deterrent forces in Turkey. In this respect, Turkish Prime Minister Demirel has announced that Turkey will not tolerate a new military aggression against the Kurdish people in northern Iraq and that it will save them and come to their rescue.

11. The determination by the United States and Europe to implement UN Security Council Resolution 688, which prevents Iraq from continuing its oppression against the Kurds, orders it to respect human rights, cautions it against launching war against the Kurdish people, and calls on it to hold an open dialogue with the Kurdish people to reach a political solution. Furthermore, the United States has officialy announced its interest in the issue of Karkuk and the need for the displaced Kurds to return to Karkuk freely, with their heads high. All this proves that the international atmosphere is suitable and favorable for the struggle of the people of Kurdistan.

The PUK Command Committee then discussed matters of organization and information and the need to improve these sectors, and endorsed the necessary measures accordingly. The committee stressed the need to continue the policy of popular struggle and to accommodate the massive tide toward the PUK. The committee noted the need to give attention to the young generations of cadres and to give the appropriate attention to the heroic region of (Bahdihan) through reliance on its native strugglers. The Command Committee urges all strugglers and cadres to learn the requirements of the new stage [words indistinct] and the need to abandon the isolationist, leftist, childish, and elitist methods in organizational and popular action. The Command Committee gave particular attention to the issue of the couragous displaced people of Karkuk, lauding their steadfastness, courage, and determination to defend their rights to return in dignity under international supervision to Karkuk, the jewel of Kurdistan. The committee underlined the need to defend the Kurdish character of the Karkuk region as far as the historical and geographical boundaries that run along the Hamrin mountain range. The committee urged the need to defend the Kurdish identity of the areas of Mandali, Khanaqin, Shaykhan, Jummar, Tall 'Afar, Furayjan, and

the remaining Kudish historic areas that are under Arab settlement. The Command Committee will make specific proposals to the PUK political leadership on the issue of the defense of these regions to take the necessary measures to settle the evacuees and displaced people in safe regions, after providing them with the necessary assistance. The committee adopted a number of decisions on facilitating dealings with the people. The committee ordered the need to adopt immediate and revolutionary measures to punish murderers and thieves, including those who falsely pose as peshmerga members within the ranks of PUK. In this respect, the Kurdistan Front will be demanded to take similar measures in this regard.

The committee decided immediately to vacate the homes occupied by peshmerga members and officals and to settle the families of the martyrs in their place. The committee called for the immediate abrogation of the obligations of the Kurdistan Front's parties with respect to the distribution of [word indistinct] and urged PUK organizations to take the lead in this respect immediately. The committee urges all PUK organizations and the peshmerga troops to deal with the people in a friendly way, to listen carefully to the masses' requests, criticism, and observations, and to take all possible measures to resolve the living, health, and educational problems of the masses. The committee stressed the need to upgrade the Kurdistan Front, unify the peshmerga troops and coordinate foreign relations, financial, and information aspects, to establish a strong secretariat comprising leading figures from the Front's parties, and to allocate the [word indistinct] revenues to accommodate the peshmerga and the families of the martyrs witnout discrimination on partisan or regional considerations. The committee gave particular attention to PUK relations with [word indistinct] and the need to preserve, enhance, and promote them to the interest of the Kurdistan Front, the revolution in Kurdistan, and the masses.

The Command Committee stressed the need to continue cooperation and promote the relations of struggle with all Iraqi opposition factions to close and unify their ranks on the basis of the democratic alternative and the democratic program, so the country might rid itself of the dictatorship, its crimes, and the disasters it has brought to the Iraqi people, Army, economy, and homeland.

The PUK will play its known role in this respect and will take the lead in joining the coming Iraqi opposition conference. The Command Committee also set the date for the first PUK congress and stressed the need to prepare and publicize the documents, research, and programs among the representatives elected to take part in the congress. The PUK Command Commitee underlines the need for continued struggle to promote the unity of Kurds, the unity of the Kurdistan Front, and the PUK. It urges PUK masses and the people to contribute effectively toward achieving this sacred mission.

The Command Committee once again promises the people that it will continue the struggle and be in the forefront of the people of Kurdistan to achieve peace, democracy, human rights, and the right to self-determination, and to resolve the living and administrative problems of the masses of liberated Kurdistan. Peace could be preserved by consolidating the unity of the Kurdish ranks and the ranks of the Kurdistan Front, by consolidating and upgrading the popular resistance movement, by taking advantage of the favorable international atmosphere and the world community's determination to prevent the dictatorship from waging a new war on Kurdistan, and by benefiting from the balance of military, political, and popular power, which is tipping in favor of the people and against the chauvinist dictatorship. Democracy will triumph over dictatorship because it is the rule of life and the spirit of the age. Human rights and the right to self-determination will be recognized through the strength of their just cause, the people's struggle, and the people's determination to achieve them in full.

ICB Affirms All Currency Denominations Available

JN2512073691 Baghdad AL-JUMHURIYAH in Arabic 23 Dec 91 p 8

[By Sana' al-Naqqash]

[Text] Baghdad—Since last week, the Iraqi Central Bank [ICB] has been pumping into circulation sufficient quantities of five and 10 dinar currency notes. In a statement to AL-JUMHURIYAH yesterday, Finance Minister Majid 'Abd Ja'far denied that these are new currency issues circulated as a result of attempts by citizens to hoard these currency notes and their refusal to carry out transactions with any other denominations. The minister said that the currency notes are old issues, which are known to all the citizens. He added that puttting them into circulation through many outlets, such as the payment of employee salaries and pensioners next month, is being done to remedy their scarcity on the market and to meet the needs for such denominations in daily life. He affirmed that there are sufficent quantities of paper and coin money of the dinar, half dinar, and quarter dinar denominations and that the ICB will continue to pump these denominations into the market regularly.

Telecommunications Facilities Under Repair

JN2312141791 Baghdad INA in English 1345 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, Dec. 23, INA—Staff of Telecommunications and Post Department of the Ministry of Transport and Communications are now engaged in a round-the-clock drive to repair damaged facilities in a bid to their pre-war state all over the country.

Department Director-General Ghassan al-'Ani told AL-THAWRAH daily that the department's staff dismantled and lifted devices and systems to most telecommunications centres to escape air bombings during the war,

adding that this has facilitated and expedited work to repair and reoperate the system. Al-'Ani added that telecommunications facilities were heavily bombed. Citing an example of barbaric bombardment, al-'Ani said the Baghdad-Amman microwave network came under heavy bombardment that almost caused a total damage of some 14 out of 20 stations working on the line.

Moreover, equipment and devices of other telecommunications centres had been looted during acts of hooliganism in some parts of the country few days after ceasefire in the war, al-'Ani said.

He added that air bombings have resulted in a complete suspension of work in a large number of telephone exchanges. These include Bab al-Mu'azzam, al-Dahamiyah, al-Rashid, al-Mu'mun, al-'Alwaiyah and al-Salihiyah telephone exchanges in Baghdad.

Telephone exchanges of al-Basrah, al-Kut, al-Nasiriyah, al- Diwaniyah, Tikrit, al-Ramadi, al-Amarah, al-Samawah, Mosul and al- Falujah as well as a number of rural exchanges in Dahuk, al-Basrah, Dhiqar and Nineawa were also damaged.

Some 17 rural telephone exchanges all over the country have sustained heavy damage that range between 30 to 100 percent, according to al-'Ani.

Iraq used to be linked internationally with telephones. Now it is difficult to telephone abroad after the allies have destroyed al- Dujayl Telecommunications Centre and other satellite stations.

However, authorities concerned were able to repair part of these stations and now it is possible to telephone some Arab and foreign countries.

Almost all the buildings, devices, main telecommunications equipment, aerials, cables and microwave networks that connect Iraq with neighbouring countries have been damaged during the war, al-'Ani said.

He added that his department's staff have managed to reconstruct and reoperate most telephone exchanges and telecommunications centres of a total capacity of 700,000 lines. The staff also reoperated Bab al-Mu'azam, al-Salihiyah, and July 14 telephone exchanges of a capacity of 20,000 telephone lines.

The 10,000-line al-Fallujah exchange has also been repaired.

The 20,000-line al-A'zamiyah exchange and the 10,000-line Abu-Tammam telephone exchange in Mosul Province are expected to be operational by the coming month, al-'Ani added.

The staff have so far repaired and reoperated some 162 microwave stations, he said, adding that they also installed five telecommunications towers and maintained 18 pivotal stations.

Moreover, they installed a complete pivotal station in al-'Amarah Province and reoperated the southern pivotal system.

Regarding the international telephone system, al-'Ani said that technicians and engineers of the department have reconstructed and reoperated al-Latifiyah ground satellite station of a capacity of 128 channels and two TV stations. They also completed reconstruction work on al-Dujayl satellite station.

Iraq's main telecommunications centres and telephone exchanges became a target of successive air raids by allied forces during the war.

The country had a modern telecommunications network in both urban and rural areas, serving millions of Iraqis through 900,000 telephone lines.

At least 400,000 of the original 900,000 telephone lines and a large number of microwave stations and towers were damaged beyond repair, while the rest were partly damaged.

The main microwave links connecting most of the cities was also damaged. This has had a strong impact on the operation of health and social services as well as humanitarian assistance programmes. All international communications were put out of service.

The reconstruction campaign going on the country is attempting to reoperate a large number of telephone exchanges and rebuild a number of microwave stations and towers damaged during the aggression.

Work requires manufacturing of parts, maintaining or reinstalling other parts and completing designs for new towers.

However, even after restoration work, the system can still handle 30 per cent of its pre-war internal service.

New Intelligence Chief, Regime 'Brutality' Viewed

NC2512161091 (Clandestine) Voice of Rebellious Iraq in Arabic 1425 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Criminal Staff Lieutenant General Sabir 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Duri has reached his current position in an attempt to deceive our people. Reckless Saddam recently appointed Sabir 'Abd al-'Aziz al-Duri director of the terrorist Saddamite intelligence service. The terrorist practices and brutality of these criminal Saddamite practices are in harmony with the barbaric military operations carried out by Saddam's mercenaries against our innocent people. The service went too far in his acts of torture, eviction, and violation of human freedoms of the various factions of our people.

The criminal al-Duri came to complete the criminal role that used to be played by Barzan al-Takriti, Saddam's half-brother, who long was in charge of the 'Aflaqite intelligence service.

According to news analyses, reckless Saddam appointed al-Duri to this criminal position to give the people and the world the false impression that the running of the unjust regime in our country is not exclusively for the al-Takriti [Saddam's] family alone, but that the positions are distributed among the various families.

Oil Minister on Oil Talks With UN in Jan

JN2412163691 Amman Jordan Television Network in Arabic 1610 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] The Iraqi oil minister has said that talks will be held with the United Nations on 6 and 7 January to return Iraq to the global oil market. The Iraqi oil minister stated that Iraq will ask the United Nations to raise the ceiling for Iraqi oil sales through long-term contracts and to use barter exchange instead of cash transactions. He added that Iraq will make a proposal to the United Nations in accordance with which it will allow the Iraqi Government to use the al-Bakr port and a pipeline across Saudi Arabia for export purposes.

Further on Minister's Comments

NC2312184591 Paris AFP in English 1831 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, Dec 23 (AFP)—Iraq is prepared to compromise on a U.N. resolution allowing it to sell a limited supply of oil, Oil Minister Usamah al-Hiti said Monday.

"An interim agreement of something in the range of 200 million barrels would probably be feasible to be pumped within the period specified by the United Nations. That's one year," al-Hiti told Agence France-Presse Monday. The United Nations, however, specified a period of six months.

"I think that (Resolution) 706 ought to be discussed again," al- Hiti said during an exhibition showing Iraq's progress in repairing war-damaged oil facilities.

His remarks were the first sign that Iraq might compromise on the U.N. resolution after denouncing its restrictions as economically unfeasible and a blow to its sovereignty. While still dissatisfied with the resolution's conditions, al-Hiti showed a willingness to negotiate.

"I think that the U.N. should try its best to make it workable. All we want is an honorable and workable resolution so we can pump our oil to world markets," the minister said. "I think that we would accept an amount which is feasible to be pumped. Probably we have explained this very well to them that the 1.6 billion seems to fall short of our needs."

The U.N. measure passed in August, along with Resolution 712, would allow Iraq to sell 1.6 billion dollars in oil to buy essential food and medicine, but one-third of that figure would have to be set aside for war reparations. "This would mean that you're only on the market just a little bit and that would affect really your credibility and being present in the market itself," he said. Al- Hiti stressed that the terms of the resolution should be "workable."

Several weeks ago in Vienna, the minister described the U.N. export plan as a "totally impractical mess drafted by non-oil people," according to the Nicosia-based newsletter Middle East Economic Survey. Diplomats said here last month the Iraqis had calculated that they would not have much left of the 930 million dollars earmarked for humanitarian needs once the costs of pumping and delivering the oil had been deducted. The resolutions call for strict U.N. control on both the sale of oil and in purchase of food and medicine as well as their distribution to the population.

Al-Hiti in September described Resolution 706 as a blow to Iraq's "sovereignty." In the interview Monday, he did not raise that argument. The minister also said Monday that 85 percent of the country's refineries hit during the war with a U.S.-led military coalition were now in working order. "But we definitely need spare parts to continue with these efforts so we can continue our oil industry at its usual rate of production," he explained.

An East European diplomat said Monday he thought the damage to oil installations was very "serious" and that Iraq still had a long way to go before returning to its pre-war capabilities. The oil minister said he did not know yet if the U.N. Security Council's decision to continue an overall trade embargo against Baghdad for at least another two months would make it easier to obtain spare parts. But the council simplified some rules and procedures regarding the implementation of sanctions imposed in August 1990, days after Iraq invaded Kuwait.

Turkey, Syria, Iran 'Depriving' Nation of Water

NC2212155191 Paris AFP in English 1520 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, Dec 22 (AFP)—Turkey, Syria and Iran are depriving Iraq of its water resources by increasing their use of the waters that flow into Iraqi territory, the agriculture and irrigation minister charged Sunday.

'Abd-al-Wahhab Muhmud al-Sabbagh, quoted BABIL by newspaper, accused his country's neighbours of stalling on negotiations over sharing their common water resources and aiming to present Iraq with a fait accompli.

Turkey, Syria and Iran are embarking on new irrigation projects and diverting waters "in contravention of international law" and at the expense of Iraqi agriculture, he said.

The River Euphrates flows from Turkey to Syria and Iraq, while the Tigris runs into Iraq directly from Turkey. Rivers such as the Karoun flow from Iran into the Shatt al-Arab in southern Iraq.

In 1990, Turkey diverted the Euphrates to fill the huge Ataturk Dam, drawing protests from Syria and Iraq. Negotiations on sharing the waters were interrupted by the Gulf crisis.

The Iraqi minister, whose country had last year rationed water from the Euphrates, said the four countries should agree on quotas before starting new irrigation projects.

Western News Agencies' Actions Criticized

JN2212212391 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1851 GMT 22 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 22 Dec (INA)—The head of the press center at the Ministry of Culture and Information said today that some Western news agencies ignore the reports sent by their correspondents in Iraq if these reports are politically not in the interest of the U.S. Administration and its allies.

The head of the press center added that these agencies sometimes distort the content of the reports they receive from their correspondents and reedit these reports to harm Iraq. He said that the best example of this blackout or distortion of Iraqi news is when CNN ignored the hunger strike staged by the German national Silka, as well as ignoring other groups of Arab citizens who have staged a hunger strike or a sit-in at the UN office and the U.S. and USSR Embassies in Baghdad, despite the fact that the CNN correspondent had a videocassette of the sit-in and had made several visits to the people there.

REUTER also has so far not published an interview that its reporter had with Mrs. Silka last week. AFP, on the other hand, played it safe by reporting very briefly on the sit-in after a while.

The head of the press center added: This conduct by some Western news agencies has not surprised us. They are either under the pressure of political administrations or they are facades for other agencies.

The head of the press center stated: Imagine what the position of Western news agencies would have been had things been reversed and had Silka been, say, a Jew. These agencies and those behind them would have left no stone unturned. They would have sent doctors and medical delegations for her; political misfits, impostors, and hypocrites would have raised a hue and cry; things never would have been quiet; and the situation would have been blown all out of proportion. However, because Silka and her colleagues have a conscience and because they staged the hunger strike out of their own conviction to express solidarity with the suffering of the Iraqi people and to denounce the unjust economic blockade of Iraq, this situation does not please the countries of aggression and those subservient to them.

Ministry on Incident Involving Iranian Diplomats

JN2512121491 Baghdad Republic of Iraq Radio Network in Arabic 1136 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] An official Foreign Ministry source has stated the following to INA:

At 0830 on 23 December, a fist fight involving two employees of the Iranian Embassy in Baghdad—Second Secretary (Murtada Merzadah) and Attache (Manochehr Berka'i)—and a member of an Iranian opposition group broke out near the main gate of one of the group's headquarters in Baghdad.

The incident occurred after the Iranian opposition member had fired his pistol. The shot hit (Manochehr Berka'i) in the abdomen.

The opposition member tried to take the embassy employees into the organization's headquarters. However, intervention by Iraqi security men, who were present at the scene after hearing the shot, calmed the situation. The injured employee was immediately taken to a hospital and the Iranian opposition member was held for questioning.

The competent Iraqi personnel have paid great attention to the incident. They began an immediate investigation to discover why the incident took place near the headquarters of an Iranian opposition group in Baghdad.

The injured diplomat is now receiving excellent care and his medical condition is being supervised by a specialized Iraqi medical team. Official Iraqi personnel and the Iranian Embassy in Baghdad are coordinating to follow up the matter.

The Iraqi charge d'affairs in Tehran has been informed of the details of the incident, as well as the measures taken by the competent Iraqi authorities, in order to pass them on to official Iranian personnel.

BABIL: ACC Still Exists but in 'New Form'

JN2412062991 Baghdad INA in Arabic 1100 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] Baghdad, 23 Dec (INA)—In a study published today, BABIL says that the Arab Cooperation Council [ACC] continues to exist, but in a new form following the 30-state aggression on Iraq, and that through it the Arab nation will defeat all conspirators.

The study adds that Iraq, Jordan, and Yemen are great countries with big capabilities, whether economic, human, or geographical. These countries will continue their good march in the council; the nucleus of Arab economic unity and integration. The study also says that this council will polarize several countries that adopted honorable pan-Arab and national positions in support of Iraq against the U.S.-Zionist-Atlantic aggression, and against the presence of the imperialist-colonialist forces in the region.

The study stresses that the past years witnessed a trend by the rich Arabs to get rid of joint Arab action. They mistakenly believe that such action only means paying money to Arab countries, institutions, organizations, and unions that need their money, and that the poor Arab countries struggle for joint Arab action only to enjoy the money of the rich Arab countries.

The paper says that based on this mistaken view, some of these Arab countries assumed the task of destroying the joint Arab action organizations under the Arab League. The rulers imposed on Kuwait were at the forefront of those carrying the pickax of destruction. These countries continue to play the same role.

The paper wonders about the fate of several Arab groupings that emerged as a nucleus for comprehensive Arab political-economic unity. Among such groupings is the Gulf Cooperation Council, which the United States dominates with its forces, fleets, and aircraft, to threaten national Arab security. The paper also wonders about the fate of the ACC after Egypt, an ACC member, adopted a position that contradicts with Arab unity, and participated in the 30-state aggression against Iraq.

The paper stresses that some Arab countries saw in such institutions what fulfills their private phased interests. Hence, they contributed to establishing these councils in order to attain specific objectives and aims, then left them at the first opportunity.

In conclusion, the study stresses the probable continuation of the joint Arab action institutions, and that the Arab nation will defeat all conspirators now that it has achieved victory through the steadfastness of the Iraqi people in the face of 30 attacking states, and now that it has restored its sons' trust in the future of the nation and in its determination to own a free and independent national will.

PRC Vice Foreign Minister on Arms Sales

TA2612111891 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 26 Dec 91 p A3

[Report by Yerah Tal]

[Excerpt] PRC Vice Foreign Minister Yang Fuchang, who is visiting Israel, said in his talks with Foreign Ministry officials that in all matters relating to arms sales to the region, the PRC will coordinate its moves with the other suppliers to the Middle East: the United States, Britain, France, and so forth.

He noted that the PRC is in contact with the special committee set up by the Western states that supply arms to the region to coordinate and supervise sales in order to reduce the arms race in the region.

Regarding the concern expressed by his hosts about Chinese arms sales to the Arab states, the Chinese official promised to convey that concern to his government. Nevertheless, he stressed that "Israel can be reassured that China will act responsibly on that matter."

Yang Fuchang handed a personal message to Foreign Minister David Levi from his Chinese counterpart Qian Qichen, with whom he has already met twice at the UN General Assembly in New York. Foreign Ministry sources described the missive as very friendly. The Chinese foreign minister expressed the hope that relations between the two countries will be established soon.

The Foreign Ministry also expects an invitation to be issued soon to Minister Levi to pay an official visit to Beijing. In his Jerusalem talks, the Chinese deputy foreign minister showed interest in the regional conference that will open in late January in Moscow, to which the PRC and 20 other countries have been invited.

The Chinese official told his hosts that "you constantly complained that we listen only to one side, to the Arabs; we have now come to hear your side." He heard in detail about the peace process and the regional peace conference from Dr. Yosef Hadas, Foreign Ministry director general.

Israel made clear to the Chinese visitor that China's participation in the regional conference first calls for the establishment of relations with Israel, although this was not presented as a condition. The Chinese guest said that he would bring it up with his government.

During the talks, Yang Fuchang avoided making promises and commitments, and it was obvious that he did not receive a mandate from his government to do so. His response to all the issues that were raised was that he will present them to his government. [passage omitted]

All Republics of Former USSR Recognized

TA2512112591 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1100 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Israel has decided to recognize all the republics in the Commonwealth of Independent States established on the ruins of the USSR and to establish diplomatic relations with them. Foreign Minister David Levi announced in the Knesset. He expressed the hope that with their newly won independence, the republics will strengthen relations and cooperation with Israel.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that the foreign minister noted that most of the republics have Jewish communities and Israel expects them to respect the communities' rights, including the right to free emigration, and is certain that this will be the case. Israel recalls and appreciates President Gorbachev's historic contribution to the opening of the gates of the USSR to aliyah.

Arens Denies Agreement Reached With Lebanon

TA2412194191 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 1800 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Excerpts] [Passage omitted] Speaking at the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee today, Defense Minister Moshe Arens said that in southern Lebanon the Hizballah continues to get stronger, and the organization, he conceded, knows more about the Israeli Army's movements than Israel knows of Hizballah activities. The defense minister noted that Army soldiers with their uniforms are easier to pick out. That is why, Arens said, Israel has to vary the nature of its operation in southern Lebanon to be able to catch the Hizballah off guard and make it feel less comfortable in the area.

The defense minister denied a report that in the peace talks, Israel and Lebanon have agreed to set up a committee to deal with an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon. [passage omitted]

Arens has categorically rejected UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar's criticism of last week's IDF [Israel Defense Forces] action at Jibshit in south Lebanon, where three Shiite villagers were detained and later released. De Cuellar said that the action had hampered his efforts to secure the release of the Israeli airman Ron Arad. Minister Arens was interviewed by our reporter Jack Katzenell:

[Begin recording] [Arens] We have done nothing to hamper the secretary general's efforts. Quite the contrary: Over the past few months we have gone out of our way to be helpful to him. We have contributed all kinds of gestures that, in his opinion, were supposed to be helpful in freeing Ron Arad. Unfortunately, so far we have heard nothing positive.

[Katzenell] Do you agree with the charge that the secretary general is preparing an alibi for his own failure?

[Arens] No, I do not feel that there is any point and that it would be appropriate or correct on my part to level any accusations against the secretary general. I want to believe, I do believe, that he is doing the best he can, and we are doing everything we can to help him.

[Katzenell] Did Israel make a mistake in agreeing to release prisoners—not once, but more than once—without the Israeli prisoners being part of the package?

[Arens] No, I do not think we made a mistake. I think we were obligated to do whatever we thought might contribute to bring about the release of our POW's and MIA's

[Katzenell] About the incident in Hungary, is Israel in a position to ensure the safety of Jews from the Soviet Union and other places on their way to Israel?

[Arens] Well, there is no full-proof method of preventing terrorist acts throughout the world; this we know. I do not want to lay the claim that we can provide foolproof protection for each and every potential target; but we have an effective intelligence service; we have very capable security people; and I think that we can provide a proper level of safety for Israelis and for people coming to Israel. [end recording]

UN Head's Remarks on Lebanon Operation Rebuffed

TA2412073391 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 0700 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Israeli security sources have repudiated the UN secretary general's allegation that the kidnapping of three Lebanese during an operation in southern Lebanon last weekend had harmed efforts to secure the release of hostages in Lebanon. The security sources said that the operation was carried out within the framework of a campaign waged by the IDF [Israel Defense Forces] against terror from southern Lebanon.

The security sources, who spoke with our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe, stated that the remarks of UN Secretary General Perez de Cuellar were designed to lay the groundwork if efforts to obtain the release of hostages held in Lebanon fail.

Lieutenant General Barag, the chief of staff, stated last night after a debriefing that the performance of the special unit that carried out the operation was perfect.

Joint Delegation Plan To Be Presented in Jan

TA2312141691 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 23 Dec 91

[Text] In his address to the Knesset Foreign Affairs and Defense Committee, Foreign Minister David Levi said that when the contacts between the Israeli and Palestinian delegations resume in early January a draft agreement, by which the sides will accept the principle of a joint Jordanian-Palestinian delegation, will be presented. The delegation will be divided into committees, each of which will discuss issues pertaining to it.

Levi also said he reported to President Bush on Iranian activity in the al-Biqa' in Lebanon and on the hundreds of Palestinians undergoing terrorist training there.

Air Force Chief Criticizes State Decisionmaking

TA2412191991 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1800 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Major General Avihu Bin-Nun, the Air Force commander, said that the decisionmaking process in Israel is unclear and disorganized. There is no proper government order. Some decisions are made late, and some decisions are not made at all. The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] does not receive political guidelines on the defense concept, and without such guidelines there is chaos, Gen. Bin-Nun said. The outcome in the field is that one year after a large project is implemented, the IDF is approached and told there is no budget. That was the case with the Lavi fighter, and I do not want to forecast what will happen to the Arrow project, he said. The Air Force commander, who is about to leave the Air Force, made the remarks in an interview to BIT'ON HEYL HA'AVIR [the Air Force magazine].

Our correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that Gen. Bin-Nun also sharply criticized the military industries, which try to dictate combat doctrine—which is often impossible—and even operational concepts for their own purposes. That was the case with the procurement of the Apache helicopters. The industries set up a lobby that even reached the Knesset and influenced the decisionmakers. Due to that, the decision to purchase the helicopters was held up for a whole year.

Gen. Bin-Nun also said that during his term the Air Force budget was cut by 400 million shekels, which caused a reduction in flight hours and the grounding of pilots in the reserves.

U.S. Would Have Allowed Attack on Iraq

TA2412175691 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Had the Air Force operated against Iraq during the Gulf war, the Americans would have permitted it, Major General Avihu Bin-Nun, the Air Force commander, said in an interview to BIT'ON HEYL HA'AVIR. He disclosed that during the first week of the war the pilots manned the aircraft and prepared to take off and attack, but it was decided at the last moment not to go. The U.S. contingency plan to permit Israel to attack became known only recently.

Air Force Chief Apologizes

TA2512113991 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Lieutenant General Ehud Baraq, chief of staff, views seriously the remarks by Major General Avihu Bin-Nun, the Air Force commander, in an interview to the Air Force bulletin. The chief of staff, however, has decided not to take steps against Gen. Bin-Nun and to accept his apology. Our army affairs correspondent Karmela Menashe reports that the Air Force commander sent a letter of apology to the chief of staff and asked that the contents be made known to the defense minister.

Arens: Remarks 'Very Grave'

TA2512204991 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Lieutenant General Ehud Baraq, chief of staff, met this morning with Major General Avihu Bin-Nun. At the end of the discussion, Gen. Bin-Nun handed Baraq a letter in which he noted that the remarks he made in the interview in BIT'ON HEYL HA'AVIR should not be made by officers in uniform. In the letter he also apologized for his mistake, which he said he regrets.

The IDF [Israel Defense Forces] spokesman stressed that the chief of staff views seriously the remarks Bin-Nun made, and had the circumstances been different, such remarks by a senior officer would have entailed the drawing of the appropriate conclusions. It was only because he presented the letter of apology that Gen. Bin-Nun's service in the military was not terminated today.

Our army affairs correspondent Moshe Shlonsky spoke this evening with Defense Minister Moshe Arens about the issue:

[Begin recording] [Shlonsky] Mr. Arens, did the remarks by the Air Force commander cause anger because of their contents or because a military general criticized the political echelons?

[Arens] It is hard to make a distinction. What took place here was very grave and, I would say, very regrettable. An IDF officer—and not just any officer, but the Air Force commander—criticized the political echelons. That is unheard of. It must never be done. It cannot be countenanced.

[Shlonsky] What about the contents of the remarks? Do you agree with some of the remarks? After all, as far as I know, he is not the only General Staff member who believes that this indeed is the situation of the decisionmakers.

[Arens] I will debate the performance of the political echelons and the decisionmaking process in it with politicians, with Knesset members, and even with officers in the reserves. I am even willing to debate it with the Air Force commander, once he takes off his uniform and leaves the military. I will not even respond to such thoughts, if they exist, of people in uniform.

[Shlonsky] You know, people are sitting at home today and watching the story of the Knesset debate on special allocations, hearing that the finance minister agreed to give the right wing 30 million shekels and approved the beginning of the construction of 600 additional housing units in the territories. At the same time they hear about distress in the defense budget. Being the defense minister, what do you say about what took place in the Knesset today?

[Arens] I suggest we not mix the two issues. We are discussing a principle that I would call sacred: Men in uniform, IDF commanders, must accept the authority of the political echelons without question. Had the Air Force commander not agreed to note in his letter to the chief of staff that he did something that must not be done—not only apologize, but admit that it must not be done—he should have, and would have, resigned from the IDF today.

[Shlonsky] Did you demand that he leave the military unless he signed a letter of apology?

[Arens] That is what would have happened.

[Shlonsky] Did the letter of apology follow a demand you made?

[Arens] That is what I agreed on with the chief of staff, and I am very glad that the Air Force commander agreed to write that letter.

[Shlonsky] Would he have had to leave the military otherwise?

[Arens] Yes. He would have had to leave the military today. [end recording]

IAI Denies Suspension of Arrow Project

TA2512090591 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 24 Dec 91

["Clarification"—YEDI'OT AHARONOT headline]

[Text] The Israel Aircraft Industries [IAI] wish to point out that the report published yesterday, according to which the development of the Arrow missile would be suspended, is incorrect. IAI engineers are proceeding with the development of the Arrow system.

Lubrani on UN Chief's Hostage Release Efforts

TA2512124291 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Uri Lubrani said today that Israel is very disappointed that the UN secretary general did not keep his promise to obtain information on Ron Arad before Christmas. But, he added, Christmas does not symbolize the end of efforts to bring about Arad's release. Lubrani visited southern Lebanon today and brought Israel's greetings to the Christians of the region. He promised them that Israel will not withdraw from the security zone

until a peace treaty has been signed with Israel containing guarantees for the personal safety of the inhabitants of the region. Hayim Hecht, our correspondent in the north, reports:

UN envoy Giandomenico Picco left Damascus yesterday after another round of talks in the region, and Israel still has no new information on navigator Ron Arad. Christmas has passed without the UN secretary general's keeping his public promise to get something by that date. We are obviously disappointed, Uri Lubrani said today, but stressed that the Israeli effort is continuing in full swing.

[Begin Lubrani recording] The initiative will continue, as far as I know. In my view, it has no time limit. We are very disappointed that some of the things we wanted to achieve through that initiative were not achieved, the main issue being the fate of Ron Arad. I can only say in the name of those who deal with the problem that no date, no milestone, will hamper us from continuing to do everything we can to bring the matter to an end. [end recording]

Lubrani refused to say whether he had accused the UN secretary general of concentrating all his efforts on getting the Nobel Peace Prize instead of clarifying Ron Arad's fate. I am a polite man; all I can say is that we had a sharp exchange, Lubrani said. The bodies of soldiers Fink and Alshekh are with Hizballah, but we cannot conduct separate negotiations now on getting them back, because it is part of the whole negotiating package.

Lubrani visited southern Lebanon today where the inhabitants are following closely the negotiations with the Lebanese delegation. They are worried that an Israeli withdrawal from Lebanon will abandon them to Lebanese goodwill. Lubrani said: We do not plan to change our deployment in the region until a peace treaty with Lebanon has been signed.

[Begin Lubrani recording] I can say from here that anything that to do with this region will not be abandoned, but will be taken into account in any negotiations. The welfare of the inhabitants and of the SLA [South Lebanese Army]—the Israeli delegation will take all those things into account when it comes to discussing a peace treaty in Washington. [end recording]

Lubrani said the Lebanese must prove to us that they are capable of taking full responsibility for the welfare of the inhabitants of the security zone.

Right-Wing Demands for Settlement Funds Accepted

TA2512135491 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1300 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Following a noisy debate that lasted over three hours, the Knesset rejected a bill calling for the cancellation of special allocation funds. The bill had been brought up for discussion by Knesset Members [MK's] Avraham Poraz [Shinuy] and Shevah Weiss [Labor].

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that the coalition mustered 59 votes against the bill, while 56 MK's voted for it. Three NRP [National Religious Party] MK's—Education Minister Zvulun Hammer, Yig'al Bibi, and Yitzhaq Levi—were absent from the plenum during the vote.

The Tehiya and Moledet reached an agreement with the finance minister on budget allocations for settlement activity in Judaea and Samaria just before the vote was taken, and therefore voted against the bill. Our correspondent has received the text of the finance minister's commitment to the Tehiya and Moledet factions, to which the prime minister agreed. Here is the text:

I have examined the budgetary demands made by the Tehiya and Moledet factions regarding Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip, and intend to accede to those demands. Signed: Finance Minister Yitzhaq Moda'i.

The agreement was reached through the mediation of Likud faction whip Tzahi Hanegbi, who rushed back and forth between his mother, MK Ge'ula Kohen [Tehiya], and Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir. The commitment apparently promises the addition of 28 million shekels for settlement in the territories as a direct budgetary increment. The construction of 6,000 housing units will also be unfrozen, and budgets will be allotted to the Construction and Housing Ministry's Rural Building and New Settlements Administration.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir adds that the three NRP MK's—Hammer, Bibi, and Levi—who were absent from the plenum and did not take part in the vote, have asserted that they had learned that if the Poraz-Weiss bill had passed, the ultra-Orthodox would have received special allocations from other government ministries in other ways.

More on New Allocations for Settlement

TA2512182791 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1700 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] The Knesset speaker asked all coalition factions to agree to Knesset Member [MK] David Zucker's [Citizens Rights Movement] demand for the disclosure of the agreements on budgetary increments for the settlements that were reached today between the finance minister and the right-wing parties.

Our correspondent Yo'el Nir reports that the agreements call for, among other things, the renewal of activities by the Construction and Housing Ministry's Rural Building and New Settlements Administration at an annual scope of approximately 100 million shekels. Twenty-eight million shekels will also be transferred to the Jewish Agency's settlement department. Six thousand housing units that were to have been constructed on the coastal plain will be diverted to the territories. Another clause notes continued support for purchasing houses in East Jerusalem, especially in Silwan. The demands of MK

Ge'ula Kohen [Tehiya] that the loan part of the absorption basket be made into a grant and that the erosion of the absorption basket over the past year be rectified were also accepted.

Senior Treasury officials asserted that all this would not require any addition to the budget, but merely the transfer of funds between various budgetary clauses.

Ministers Discuss Civil Guard in Territories

TA2512205791 Jerusalem Israel Television Network in Hebrew 1900 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Prime Minister Yitzhaq Shamir today summoned a special ministerial meeting at his office to discuss the establishment of a civil guard in the territories. Our correspondent Shlomo Arad reports that the meeting dealt with the authority to be given the settlers who would join the civil guard, and the principles guiding their operations against Arab residents. Our correspondent notes that the regulations and decrees that would allow the opening of civil guard branches in the territories are to be signed by the defense minister.

Settlers Join Army Patrols in Nabulus

TA2612053791 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in English 0500 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Army commanders in Judaea and Samaria are inviting Jewish settlement leaders to join them on patrols in Nabulus' casbah, a neighborhood that has become notorious for the level of violence by Palestinian uprising activists. Already, seven settlement leaders have taken up the offer. During the tour, the head of Army Central Command, Major General Dani Yatom, and senior commanders explained Army measures taken to ensure quiet. The settlement leaders were said to have expressed appreciation for the Army's efforts.

Settlement Leaders Adopt 'Extremist' Resolutions

TA2412191791 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1705 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] The Council of Jewish Settlements in Judaea, Samaria, and the Gaza Strip [CJSJSGS] today adopted what could be called extremist and far-reaching resolutions on the security situation in the territories. Our correspondent Mikha'el Tuchfeld reports:

The most important sentence uttered to me by one of the CJSJSGS members after the meeting was: We feel that the inhabitants were right in their criticism of us when we tried to restrain their actions in the field. Therefore, as you have just said, the resolutions are far-reaching and extremist, and they reflect the stormy meeting, which lasted almost six hours. It could be said that the actions are aimed at the inner cabinet, which convenes tomorrow morning. The resolutions refer to an unequivocal demand to the prime minister and the cabinet to make decisions in response to the declaration of war by the Arabs in the territories following the shootings and murders. The CJSJSGS resolved that the calls by the chief of staff and the defense minister to maintain public order amount to a denial of responsibility for the security situation. The council said that until the government adopts the necessary policy, the council will initiate firm actions, and it has already called on the settlers to bolster their actions without confronting IDF [Israel Defense Forces] soldiers, a phrase always used.

Two council members who arrived at the Knesset told me that the patrols around settlements and other actions would begin tonight. The resolutions also contain a call to set up more settlements immediately. The resolutions are perhaps unprecedented in their severity; the tone of appeasement has disappeared. These resolutions originated from below, among the settlers and rabbis, perhaps because the leaders were unwilling to lose control.

Most of Jordan Rift Valley Closed Military Zone

TA2412190191 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1705 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Excerpts] There is a new situation in the Jordan Rift Valley following a decree, issued by a military commander, making most of the area a closed military zone. The decree was exposed by CRM [Citizens Rights Movement] Knesset Member [MK] Dedi Zucker. Our correspondent Yo'el Nir says that the area will possibly not be included in the autonomy offer to be made to the Palestinians:

The area in question is about 25 percent of the entire territory of Judaea and Samaria. The decree, which on the face of it looks innocent, hides numerous implications.

First, a brief explanation: So far, there has been no territorial continuity of closed military zones in the Jordan Rift Valley. The zones were closed for a number of reasons, such as being firing zones, or belonging to absentee land owners. The new decree closed additional territories, thus creating a continuous area of closed military zones spreading from the southern Hebron Hills to the Bet She'an Valley, and from the Jordan River up to the Judaea and Samaria mountain ridge. Two corridors leading across Judaea and Samaria to the Jordan River were left open—one leading to Salfit and the other to Jericho. The whole thing corresponds to the Alon plan. The decree restricts the free movement of the residents of the territories, prevents economic activity, and, since it is a military decree, allows no possibility of court appeal. Above all, the decree has political meaning. [passage omitted]

The most reasonable meaning is that the decision might have implications for autonomy. Whatever the meaning, the fact is that most of the Jordan Rift Valley is today a closed military zone.

Sharon Wants Doubling of Jews in Muslim Quarter

TA2312144091 Tel Aviv HA'ARETZ in Hebrew 23 Dec 91 p A1

[Report by Nadav Shragay and Shahar Ilan]

[Text] A plan to double the Jewish population in the Old City of Jerusalem inside the walls (and outside the Jewish Quarter) will soon be submitted to the Jerusalem District planning committee for quick processing.

The plan proposes the construction of 200 housing units over an area of 14 dunams inside the Old City walls, near Herod's Gate. The plan has a good chance of being approved because it is backed by the Construction and Housing Ministry, the Company for the Development of the Jewish Quarter, and the 'Ateret Kohanim Yeshiva.

The 'Ateret Kohanim Yeshiva plans to build a new wing in this new area, to join the existing building on Hagay Street. Since 1978, Jews have been settling the Jewish Quarter [as published], with government encouragement, through two associations: 'Atara Leyoshna and 'Ateret Kohanim. There are some 600 Jews in the Muslim Quarter today, including those in institutions, and a similar number of Jews will settle in the new Jewish zone in the Old City inside the walls. Construction and Housing Minister Ari'el Sharon ordered the establishment of this new Jewish neighborhood. The detailed plan was prepared by the architect Yesha'yahu Ilan.

Al-Husayni Ready for Unofficial Talks With Likud

TA2412122791 Jerusalem Qol Yisra'el in Hebrew 1005 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Faysal al-Husayni is ready to meet with Likud members for unofficial talks prior to the Washington round of talks on 7 January. In a briefing to correspondents who cover the territories, al-Husayni noted that he had recently held contacts with Likud members that had been useful to both sides. Moti Amir reports:

Faysal al-Husayni is not interested in making public whether he met personally with Likud members, and has not said what was discussed in his contacts with them. In a briefing for territories correspondents, al-Husayni said that he will not take part in the 7 January talks in Washington because the Japanese Government has invited him for an official visit on that date. Nevertheless, he stressed, he will try to do everything possible to advance the peace process, and called on Likud personalities to meet with him for unofficial talks.

[Begin al-Husayni recording] I am prepared to sit, and I am prepared to discuss everything unofficially, but if we want something official, then I will do it another way. At present, however, I am prepared to sit anywhere with Likud members to conduct an unofficial discussion, which I believe is good for them, too. [end recording]

Al-Husayni warned against being incited by violent actions by Palestinian extremists and Israelis whose aim is to sabotage peace. He stressed that there is an attempt to solve the problem of representation and the composition of the delegations before 7 January, the date for the next round of Washington talks. He said that if the problems are not resolved, the corridor talks between the three delegation leaders might continue. Al-Husayni announced that he will participate in the multilateral talks in Moscow, but said that if there is no progress in the bilateral talks then the multilateral discussions will become academic, devoid of practical value, since any settlement in the region is linked to a solution of the Palestinian problem.

Ne'eman Denies Report on Soviet Reactor Purchase

TA2312125491 Tel Aviv YEDI'OT AHARONOT in Hebrew 23 Dec p 16

[Report by Gabi Baron and the London correspondent]

[Text] The Ministry of Science and Technology and of Energy and Infrastructure officially denied a report published yesterday in THE SUNDAY TIMES that Israel had signed an agreement to purchase from the Soviet Union at a total cost of 2 billion pounds sterling [approximately $3.7 billion] a nuclear reactor to produce electricity.

The British paper reported that an agreement on this was reached last week.

Sources at the ministry reported that the only thing that Israel has today is a Soviet commitment, including a personal commitment by Mikhail Gorbachev, on the USSR's readiness to supply Israel with "heavy components" of a nuclear power plant scheduled for establishment in the Negev.

Minister Yuval Ne'eman yesterday reacted by saying: "Complete nonsense. Our intention is eventually to purchase components for a nuclear power plant from the Soviet Union, but no purchase agreement or anything similar has yet been signed."

Sources: Buckley Remains To Be Handed Over

NC2412165591 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1640 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Diplomatic sources expect the body of U.S. hostage William Buckley, former chief of the Central Intelligence Agency bureau, to be handed over in the near future. The same sources expect the handover to take place in a manner similar to that involving the body of U.S. officer William Higgins, which has been handed over in Beirut to the U.S. Embassy and will be transported to the United States.

Buwayz Comments Upon Return of Talks Delegation

NC2412195891 Beirut Voice of Lebanon in Arabic 1715 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] The Lebanese delegation to the Washington peace talks arrived in Beirut this afternoon. At 1600 they met with Foreign Minister Faris Buwayz and briefed him on the outcome of the Washington talks. Both Minister Buwayz and Ambassador Suhayl Shammas, head of the delegation, said that the talks failed to make the desired progress. Shammas said that what took place was a frank and profound discussion of the issues at hand. Shammas added that the Israeli side declared that Israel has no ambitions on Lebanese land.

The meeting between Buwayz and the delegation ended at 1630 today. Afterward, Buwayz said:

[Begin recording] [Buwayz] There is no doubt that there was maneuvering and procrastination on the Israeli side. This was an overwhelming feature of the talks, and it prevented the achievement of the desired progress. Lebanon proved its seriousness and commitment to the international peace plan. Up to the last minute, Lebanon pursued the talks with the hope that some positive result would be achieved. So far, we can say that the talks were serious and marked with a high degree of diplomatic and political sophistication. The talks may resume on 8 January in Washington.

I am fully confident that the Lebanese delegation will be at the level of the responsibility assigned to it.

[Unidentified correspondent] Mr. Minister, as long as the Israeli negotiator is maneuvering and the U.S. sponsor has not intervened to stop it, is there any use continuing the talks?

[Buwayz] So far, we cannot say that the U.S. side failed to live up to its commitments. Actually, I believe that, up to now, the U.S. side has been following the talks closely and continually and we do not have, up to now, any criticism of the U.S. side. [end recording]

As for Ambassador Suhayl Shammas, he said after meeting Minister Buwayz:

[Begin recording] The talks have not made progress. The talks were difficult and thorny. What took place was a frank and detailed discussion of the positions. But I have this to say for the public and official record: The Israeli side has agreed to two matters, and we believe that this Israeli agreement is important. What matters is not what we believe is right. What matters is that the Israelis make a commitment. During the talks—or negotiations, if you wish—the Israelis stated that Israel has no ambitions or designs against or toward Lebanese territory, not even one inch of this land. The Israeli side in the same session again stressed that Israel has no ambition even toward one drop of Lebanese water. The chief of the Lebanese delegation answered the Israelis by saying: We have taken cognizance of that point. We will put the word Lebanese [water] on record. This is because this word has a certain significance in the legal sense and it did not escape the Lebanese delegation and its experts. We have, thank God, excellent legal experts in the delegation. So, that is what we have done. [end recording]

[Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic at 1650 GMT carries a recording of Shammas' remarks to reporters on the same occasion.

[An unidentified correspondent tells Shammas: "Lubrani said that the Lebanese-Israeli talks would have made more progress without Syrian pressure, or influence, on Lebanon."

[Shammas answers by saying: "Lubrani can say anything he wants. He presents his country's policy and has the right to say anything. But he knows, his colleague knows, and the members of the Israeli delegation know, that the Lebanese side was the one evaluating the Lebanese position and expressing it in the light of the supreme Lebanese national interests.

["Lubrani may say what he wants, and we have the right to evaluate the situation and act in accordance with our supreme national interests. We have told the Israelis in the talks that Lebanon and Syria have special and distinguished relations and that Lebanon is coordinating with all the other delegations, that this coordination is an ongoing process, and that we particularly coordinate—for numerous reasons, of which the Israeli side is fully aware—with the Syrian side. This coordination—the general coordination with the Arabs and the special coordination with Syria—is nothing for which we have to apologize to anyone."]

Prime Minister on Delegation

NC2512192791 Beirut Radio Lebanon in Arabic 1630 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Excerpt] In Tripoli today, Prime Minister 'Umar Karami received Ambassador Suhayl Shammas, head of the Lebanese delegation to the Washington talks, who briefed him on the outcome of those talks. After the meeting, Karami told reporters the following:

[Begin recording] [Karami] His excellency the secretary general of the Foreign Ministry and head of the Lebanese delegation to Washington briefed me on all the details of the talks. I found that the Lebanese delegation had

strictly followed the directives and decisions of the Lebanese Government. The Lebanese position is clear and explicit in demanding the unconditional implementation of UN Resolution 425. Naturally, Israel is maneuvering as usual, but the Lebanese stand, which is committed to an international resolution issued by the highest international organization, is clear and needs no further interpretation or any maneuvers. Thus, we are satisfied with what his excellency the secretary general told us. We hope the third round will be more (?successful) than this one.

[Unidentified correspondent] What about the continued Israeli intransigence on Resolution 425?

[Karami] I believe it is too early to judge this stand. As a result of the letter of assurances we received from the United States as well as the continuing contacts, I believe the United States will have credibility, and that reality on the ground will be different from what it has been so far. We hope so.

[Correspondent] Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. [end recording]

For his part, Ambassador Shammas said:

[Begin recording] [Shammas] [words indistinct] You know that it is the diplomat's job to give adequate information to the press in light of the national supreme interests. But I would not be honest if I did not tell you that I told his excellency the prime minister some things that I cannot reveal to you, not because they affect the supreme national interests, but because maintaining their confidentiality serves the supreme national interests. So as a diplomat, I cannot fail in my job by telling you. This is a political decision for his excellency the prime minister to make. [passage omitted] [end recording]

Israeli Patrol Said Ambushed in South

NC2512075491 Ba'labakk Voice of the Oppressed in Arabic 0630 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] At 2330 yesterday and with the call O Zahra' [daughter of Prophet Muhammad] on the anniversary of the birth of Christ, may peace be upon him, the Islamic resistance ambushed a Zionist patrol between al-Dabshah and Tuhrah. The occupation troops in the two positions took part in the ensuing fierce clash. Gripped by hysteria, the enemy used helicopters and lit the sky with flares.

The operation caused several casualties among enemy ranks and all the mujahidin brothers returned safely to base, supported by divine victory.

Israelis Free Amal Official Arrested 20 Nov

NC2412124991 (Clandestine) Voice of the People in Arabic to Lebanon 1130 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] The occupation forces released citizen Mahmud Yasin and his son Hasan and nephew Husam at 1100 today. They were handed over to Marj 'Uyun gendarmerie platoon Commander Major Roger Salim, who took them to Kafr Tibnit crossing, where they will be handed to the Amal Movement command.

The Israeli forces had arrested Yasin, an Amal [word indistinct] official in the south, together with his son and nephew during an infiltration operation in Majdal Silm on 20 November during which they blew up the home of Ma'mun Yasin, killing his daughter and wounding her mother and three brothers.

Al-Asad Receives Iran's Mohajerani, Delegation

JN2412153991 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1515 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] At 1215 today, President Hafiz al-Asad received Dr. 'Ata'ollah Mohajerani, Iranian deputy president for legal and parliamentary affairs, and his accompanying delegation. The meeting was attended by Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam and Iranian Ambassador in Damascus Hasan Akhtari.

Mohajerani conveyed to the president a message from Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani. The president asked the Iranian deputy president to convey a reply as well as his greetings and wishes to President Rafsanjani.

Discussion during the meeting dealt with overall developments in the region and with relations and cooperation between Syria and Iran.

Stress Unity Against Israel

LD2412192191 Tehran IRNA in English 1836 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Damascus, Dec. 24, IRNA—Visiting Iranian Vice President 'Ata'ollah Mohajerani on Tuesday briefed President Hafiz al-Asad on Iran's viewpoints on regional and international issues. Mohajerani, referring to the Zionist regime's expansionist policies and U.S. plots to push Arab countries into a compromise, said it was necessary for Islamic and nationalist forces in Lebanon and Palestine to cooperate in their fight against Israel.

President al-Asad underlined the need to expand Tehran-Damascus ties which he described as "deep rooted and strategic." The Syrian president, too, called for unity between all anti-Zionist regime forces.

Mohajerani Confers With Khaddam

LD2412193191 Tehran IRNA in English 1637 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Damascus, Dec. 24, IRNA—Iranian Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs 'Ata'ollah Mohajerani conferred with Syrian Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam here today. Mohajerani elaborated on Iranian stances vis-a-vis the latest regional developments, and stressed the need for furthering Tehran-Damascus relations in the face of Zionist plots. Khaddam in reply gave a detailed analysis on regional and global developments, and termed the current situation in the region as "very sensitive and crucial." He reiterated the need for further coordination between the two countries. The two sides also agreed to hold the meeting of the Iran-Syria high commission in Tehran soon.

Delegation Departs

JN2512141391 Damascus Syrian Arab Republic Radio Network in Arabic 1215 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Excerpt] At 1200 today, Dr. 'Ata'ollah Mohajerani, Iranian deputy president for legal and parliamentary affairs, and his accompanying delegation left Damascus after a three-day visit to Syria. During his visit, he conveyed to President Hafiz al-Asad a message from Iranian President Hashemi-Rafsanjani. Vice President 'Abd-al-Halim Khaddam led those who saw him off at Damascus International Airport. [passage omitted]

Al-Shar' Urges U.S. Role in Bilateral Talks

JN2412174691 Paris Radio Monte Carlo in Arabic 1710 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] Syrian Foreign Minister Faruq al-Shar' has declared to the Qatari newspaper AL-SHARQ that it is illogical to discuss issues of regional cooperation, water sharing, economic relations, and disarmament before discussing the essence of the peace process: namely, Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories.

Minister al-Shar' called on the U.S. Administration to effectively intervene to launch the bilateral negotiations. He explained that Syria's entry into the peace process was never based on trust in Israel, but rather on U.S. assurances to implement the resolutions of international legitimacy.

Afghanistan

Diplomatic Recognition for Ukraine, Belarus

LD2512065991 Kabul BAKHTAR in English 0533 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Kabul, Dec. 24, BAKHTAR—Abiding its peaceful and non-aligned foreign policy and by pursuance of the principle of self-determination of nations and respecting the will of the peoples, the state of the Republic of Afghanistan recognises the republics of Ukraine (RU) and Belarus (RB) as independent states, says statement of the RA released here today.

Afghanistan as an independent country enjoying free judgement vis-a-vis the international issues and by respecting all the accepted international norms and principles governing in the international relations and by strictly observance of the UN charter is in favour of maintaining friendly relations with all world countries based on the principles of peaceful co-existence, mutual respect and non-interference in the internal affairs of each other, it says.

It believes that establishing of independent ties with the RU and RB on the basis of old relations existing between the sides, will pave grounds for the further expansion and growth of bilateral beneficial ties between the peoples of these countries in different political, economic, cultural, scientific and technical areas as well as preservance of peace and stability in the region and world, the statement concludes.

Armenia, Moldova

LD2512173191 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1530 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Afghan Government statement—announcer-read]

[Text] In the name of God, the merciful, the compassionate. Pursuing a nonaligned and peaceful foreign policy, respect for the right to self-determination of nations, and the will of the people of the Republics of Armenia and Moldova toward achieving their self-determination, the Government of the Republic of Afghanistan officially recognizes those republics as independent states.

As an independent state, the Republic of Afghanistan, in consideration of respect for international norms and principles, the observation of the UN Charter—which demands friendly relations with all countries of the world on the basis of peaceful coexistence, noninterference and mutual respect for territorial integrity—believes that the formation, expansion, and consolidation of independent relations between the Republic of Afghanistan and the Republics of Armenia and Moldova, under the new conditions are in the interests of the peoples of both countries in the political, economic, trade, scientific, technical, and cultural areas and will help toward the high cause of peace, stability, and tranquillity in the region and the world.

Eight Killed in Kabul Rocket Attack

LD2612003191 Kabul Radio Afghanistan Network in Pashto 1430 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Eight residents of Kabul, including women and children, were martyred and nine others were injured today as a result of surface-to-surface missiles fired by extremists. The BAKHTAR INFORMATION AGENCY military section reports that the injured were taken to the hospital quickly and have been receiving intensive medical treatment.

The extremists fired ten surface-to-surface missiles from the east into wards four and nine. Besides the loss of life, two of our compatriots' houses were destroyed and another was set ablaze.

Today's rockets were of the Sakar type, which are supplied by the Pakistani military to extremist armed groups in contravention of international norms for the terrorizing and mass killing of our compatriots and for the prolongation of fratricide in our country.

Bangladesh

Update on Burma Border Tension, Transit Points

BK2512020891 Dhaka Radio Bangladesh Network in English 0130 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Myanmar [Burma] Army and police have intensified their atrocities on the Arakanese Muslims along the Bangladesh-Myanmar border after reinforcement of the security measures. According to information received from the Arakanese Muslims who crossed over to Bangladesh during the past few days, Myanmar troops and police imposed restriction on the movement of Arakanese Muslims living adjacent to Bangladesh-Myanmar border. They said Muslims are not allowed by the Myanmar troops to move from one village to another.

Meanwhile, the Bangladesh side has not yet received any response from the Myanmar side for a flag meeting, nor has it already asked for [words indistinct]. According to reports, high tension along the border has subsided to some extent and refugees who left the border village have started returning to their homes. The Myanmar Government has closed Teknaf, (Mila) and (Lether) transit points along the border.

India

Prime Minister Announces Austerity Measures

BK2412163191 Delhi All India Radio Network in English 1530 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] The prime minister today announced several austerity measures including a move for a 10-percent reduction in senior-level posts of joint secretary and above in central ministries and departments. Mr.

Narasimha Rao also announced the government's decision to abolish over 1,000 posts in the offices of the Chief Controller of Imports and Exports, Cement Controller and the Director General of Technical Development. Making his concluding remarks at the two-day deliberation of the National Development Council [NDC] in New Delhi this evening, the prime minister said a committee headed by the cabinet secretary is examining a similar pruning exercise in all other departments. It will be completed by the 29th February.

Mr. Rao said the cut in senior-level posts has become necessary after liberalization of the trade and industrial policies and removal of controls. The prime minister also announced that all ministries and departments should surrender 10 percent of their telephone lines by the end of next month. The allocation for domestic and foreign travel will be cut by 20 percent next year. Mr. Narasimha Rao said first class air travel by central ministers going abroad will be banned. The Rajya Sabha chairman and the speaker of the Lok Sabha are to be moved to extend this ban to the foreign travel of all MPs. The government will also approach the chief justice of the Supreme Court to put a similar ban for judges.

The prime minister made appeal to the chief ministers to consider similar austerity measures in their states. Our correspondent says the NDC unanimously approved the directional paper on the Eighth Plan and cleared the formula for distribution of the central assistance to the states. The council also agreed to transfer 113 centrally-sponsored schemes to the states as suggested by the Narasimha Rao [name as heard] Committee.

The prime minister observed that the NDC meeting demonstrated that planning is a joint effort. He announced the setting up of four subcommittees of the council to deal with micro-level planning, employment, population and austerity to ensure more interaction between the center and the states. He also agreed to a suggestion of the chief ministers for a standing committee of the NDC for frequent consultations.

Briefing newsmen, the deputy chairman of the Planning Commission, Mr. Pranab Mukherjee, gave details of the formula for allocation of central assistance to the states. He said for 15 nonspecial category states, 60 percent weightage will be given to population at the 1971 level in the allocation of the central assistance. He said per capita income will get 25 percent weightage, while special problems and performance will get a weightage of 7.5 percent each. Mr. Mukherjee explained that fiscal management and effort in national priority areas like population control, externally-aided projects, literacy and land reforms will be the key elements in judging the performance of the states. Tax efforts will continue to get due recognition as in the past. He said that while transferring the centrally-sponsored schemes, the existing pattern of resource allocation will continue. He said the meeting also agreed on the modalities for distribution of market borrowings.

Iran

Independence of Former Soviet Republics Recognized

LD2412220991 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 2030 GMT 24 Dec 91

[Text] The Islamic Republic of Iran has recognized the independence of the Republic of the Russian Federation and six Asian republics. Announcing the above in Mashhad, on the eve of his visit to the Republic of Turkmenistan, Mr Va'ezi, deputy foreign minister for European and American affairs, said: We are about to reopen [bazgoshah'i] our diplomatic missions in the capitals of the republics of Azarbaijan, Turkmenistan, the Russian Federation, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and Kyrgyzstan. To that end, a diplomatic delegation from the Islamic Republic of Iran will depart on Wednesday morning to Ashkabad, the capital of the Republic of Turkmenistan.

Foreign Ministry Protests to Swiss on Arrest

LD2512074191 Tehran IRNA in English 0618 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 25, IRNA—Iranian Foreign Ministry Tuesday strongly protested arrest of a staff member of the Iranian Embassy in Bern by Swiss Police on baseless charges. The Swiss charge d'affaires to Tehran was summoned to the Foreign Ministry Tuesday by the Ministry's Director General for Western Europe Hamid Reza Asefi. Asefi told the Swiss diplomat that the measure was in violation of international norms and conventions. He said the Islamic Republic Government was gravely concerned over the issue and that it will have detrimental effects on Tehran-Bern ties. Asefi demanded immediate and unconditional release of the detained embassy staff [as received]. The Swiss diplomat expressing regret over the incident pledged to convey the matter to his government promptly and make efforts to solve the issue.

Arrest Called 'Illogical, Unjust'

LD2612094791 Tehran IRNA in English 0802 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Tehran, Dec. 26, IRNA—The Iranian Embassy in Bern Wednesday protested the arrest of an embassy staff [as received] for complicity in the assassination of Shahpour Bakhtiar, the last prime minister of the defunct shah of Iran killed in his Paris house August 6.

In a press release the embassy said that the arrest was "illogical and unjust" and that the charges against the Iranian member of the embassy were unfounded. The document said the arrested person had been employed by the embassy long after the assassination of Bakhtiar, and called on the Swiss Government to release him as soon as possible.

Commenting on the issue and on the reaction Wednesday by the Iranian Foreign Ministry the Persian

daily "JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI" warned Thursday that the Swiss Government is needlessly involving itself in an unwise scenario "because security and freedom of action of the Swiss diplomatic corps in Tehran may be overshadowed by the move."

The daily said since the assassination of Shahpour Bakhtiar the French Government has had hard time trying to offer an explanation on why the French police failed to prevent the incident, and added that the arrest of the Iranian Embassy staffer in Bern may well have been part of a face-saving device by secret elements here and there.

JOMHURI-YE ESLAMI said the fact that the French police had bungled in relation with Bakhtiar's assassination is the problem of France, and commented "there is little reason why the Swiss Government should want to partake of the problem of France."

In another reaction to the subject the Persian daily "ABRAR" said Thursday that the arrest of the Iranian member of the embassy had been against international conventions. It said over the past 13 years the Swiss Government had shown hostile gestures against the Islamic Republic by way of harboring Iran's counter-revolutionaries and run-away Iranians "who had plundered the Iranian nation" before the revolution.

The daily said the Swiss Government should once and for all decide on what kind of relations it wants to have with Iran. "If it should want to have healthy relations with Iran," said the daily, "it will need a solid political decision, and will have to respect the established values of the Islamic Revolution as well as the international customs and conventions."

ABRAR commented that in the event such actions should continue in the future Iran will reserve the right to retaliate, and reminded that the Iranian nation cannot afford to remain indifferent towards such incidents.

It said the Swiss Government would be wise to release the arrested Iranian and do something "by way of clearing the mist in the mind of the public conscience in Iran... in default of which the Swiss Government will have to face the consequences."

Swiss Warned Against Extradition

LD2512113591 Tehran Voice of the Islamic Republic of Iran First Program Network in Persian 1030 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] A spokesman for our country's Foreign Ministry referred to the arrest of an employee of the Embassy of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Switzerland under the vague allegations of having links with those charged with Bakhtiar's killing as an act contrary to all international regulations. He added that any links between this individual and Bakhtiar's killing is an outright lie.

He said: A message has been conveyed to the Swiss Government that it should take steps to promptly release the detained employee of Iran's embassy in Switzerland.

The Foreign Ministry spokesman further added: The Swiss Government has been strongly warned that it has no right under any circumstances to hand over the said employee to the French court. He said: Last night the Swiss charge d'affaires was informed in the Foreign Ministry that there is no justification for continuing this detention and the Swiss Government will be responsible for the undesirable consequences of this affair on the two countries' relations.

It is necessary to mention that a French judicial authority has demanded the arrest and extradition to France of an administrative employee of the Iranian Embassy in Switzerland on charges of having links with those accused of killing Bakhtiar.

Pakistan

Spokesman on Support for Russian UN Seat

BK2612112491 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1100 GMT 26 Dec 91

[Text] Pakistan will support the move to enable the Russian Federation to assume the seat of the former Soviet Union in the UN Security Council and General Assembly. A foreign office spokesman said in Islamabad today, Pakistan regards the Russian Federation as the successor state to the Soviet Union. He said steps would be taken by Pakistan and the Russian Federation to develop cooperation in various fields following the visit of Vice President Mr. Rutskoy to Pakistan. The spokesman pointed out that Pakistan has already extended recognition to seven republics which are members of the Commonwealth of Independent States. He said Pakistan is considering about recognition of the remaining republics of the Commonwealth and indicated that the decision would be forthcoming soon.

Sharif Condemns Opposition Action in Parliament

BK2512164091 Islamabad Radio Pakistan Network in English 1600 GMT 25 Dec 91

[Text] The prime minister has once again condemned the opposition for showing disrespect to the president during his address to parliament and asked them to observe norms of political parliamentary practice. In a statement issued in Islamabad tonight, Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif said in any civilized society, exercise of freedom and liberty is carefully balanced with a willing respect for the basic norms and institutions which sustain and nurture democracy. He said failure to do so can only weaken and jeopardize these vital norms and institutions. He said the opposition reached a new and entirely unfortunate level of escalation in their continuous onslaught on our democratic institutions when on 19th of this month they tried to undermine the sanctity of most solemn day in our parliamentary calendar, that is, address by the president to the two houses of parliament.

Mr. Mohammad Nawaz Sharif said when the prestige of the president is lowered it is not only the prestige of an individual, but also the honor and dignity of the nation. He said in showing disrespect to the president who is the symbol of the unity of the federation the opposition has dealt a serious blow to our national pride and dignity. The negative reverberations of their conduct are bound to be felt not only within the country, but also outside it. The nation holds them responsible for lowering its esteem in other countries where reverence for the head of state as well as for representative institutions is valued and cherished. We strongly condemn the attitude and conduct of the opposition. The prime minister appealed to all members of opposition parties to express their difference with the government within the universally accepted norms of the political and parliamentary practice. He said they should avoid actions which can erode the very foundations on which the edifice of our state and our democratic way of life is based.